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*L.<sup>d</sup> John S. Billings U.S.A.*

*with the compliments of  
R. E. Colston.*

THE BRITISH CAMPAIGN IN THE SOUDAN  
FOR THE RESCUE OF GORDON.

BY

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I propose to present in this paper an outline narrative of the war in the Soudan for the rescue of "Chinese Gordon." The limits of such an article forbid more than a brief allusion to the events which led to this war, and which are still fresh in the public mind. They may be summarized as follows :

The brilliant and prodigal career of the ex-Khedive Ismaïl-Pasha ending in his financial ruin.

The installation of European commissioners of the public debt, followed by swarms of high-paid British officials taking entire control of Egyptian finances, revenues, railroads, and telegraphs.

The resistance of Ismaïl to their usurpation of his powers, and his compulsory abdication enforced by the British and French Consuls-General, June 26, 1879.

The merely nominal rule of his son Tewfik, and the sacrifice of every Egyptian interest to the payment of foreign bondholders; the dissatisfaction of the people, and the opposition of the Egyptian army to being made the chief victims of this policy, culminating in the military revolt of Arabi-Pasha; the bombardment of Alexandria,



the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, and the British occupation of Egypt in 1882.

These events made England the sole and absolute arbiter of Egypt's fate, for France had withdrawn from the "Dual Control" before the bombardment of Alexandria, rather than participate in that ruthless deed.

In October 1883, after one year of British domination, this was the situation of affairs :

The young Khedive was deprived of all real authority, British commissioners having more than ever before absolute control of the resources of the country and its entire administration.

The Egyptian regular army was entirely disbanded, except a few of Arabi's disaffected regiments, sent to the Soudan as a punishment for their rebellion.

A new native army composed of fresh levies, supposed by a convenient fiction to be the Khedive's army, but commanded by British officers, was created under Sir Evelyn Wood. A native constabulary force called *gendarmérie* (whose officers were chiefly Italian), raised to serve as police and not as soldiers, was organized under Valentine Baker-Pasha, the British ex-colonel of hussars.

The hitherto undisputed power of the Egyptian government, which had enabled it to enforce order and obedience upon the turbulent and barbarous populations of the Soudan, was fatally impaired, for the garrisons had already been reduced for reasons of economy, in order that the bondholders' coupons might be paid ; and now a general impression that the Khedive had sold his country to Christians and foreigners began to prevail among the people, and to give double encouragement to the Mahdi's rebellion which had commenced two years before.



Having taken entire possession of the country, avowedly not as a conqueror but expressly as a friend and protector, solely to defend her ally the Khedive against his rebellious subjects, England became *in equity* Egypt's guardian, and as she had rendered her defenceless, she was bound by every consideration of justice to shield her from all harm.

How had she come to occupy such a position after her repeated declarations that the Suez Canal was the only British interest involved in Egypt, and that so long as it was safe, England would decline all interference in Egyptian affairs?

She had been driven step by step, almost unwittingly, to assume this rôle by the pressure of British bondholders numerous and powerful enough to control both Parliament and ministers. England's attitude at this time was tersely described by Hon. Henry Labouchere, the eminent M. P. and also editor of *Truth*, in these words: "Why are we in Egypt? THAT SHYLOCK MAY HAVE HIS POUND OF FLESH!"

Two courses were open to England.

One was to frankly assume a protectorate and to govern Egypt directly, either continuing the Khedive in his rôle of a mere figure-head or else removing and pensioning him off like an Indian Rajah.

The other was to limit the sphere of British action to securing the Khedive's power until he could re-organize his own army and consolidate his government. This object once attained, he should have been left free to govern Egypt in his own way, providing only for his compliance with the obligations he had contracted.

But just at this time commenced that astounding series

of vacillations, both political and military, that were destined to produce such disastrous results.

To proclaim a protectorate over Egypt was to falsify the declarations so often repeated to the world, and to incur the hostility of Turkey and France as well as the jealousy of other powers.

On the other hand, to withdraw her army from Egypt and leave the Khedive to govern independently, seemed to the British ministry a sacrifice of prestige and of the advantages apparently secured by the occupation.

In the words of a distinguished publicist\*: "The ministry cherished the delusion that some middle course was open to them, by which, while retaining the advantages of a virtual protectorate, they could avoid the liabilities inseparable from its overt assumption. . . . We have deranged every thing and have established nothing in its place." While England held the Khedive in the most absolute tutelage, shorn of every power, she wished the world to believe that he enjoyed entire freedom of action and was alone responsible for the acts of his government. In pursuance of this policy of half measures, a partial evacuation was announced by Mr. Gladstone at the Guildhall banquet in London on the 9th of Nov., 1883, and this declaration was considered as the prelude to a complete withdrawal of the British army from Egypt. Consequently the reforms and innovations forced upon the Egyptian people in spite of their bitter antipathy were now regarded by them as temporary evils which would cease with the British occupation. To quote again from the same writer:

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\* Edward Dicey, Professor of Political Science and Economy at Oxford, in the *Nineteenth Century* for March, 1884.



"Egypt was given to understand that after having bombarded Alexandria, invaded the country, exiled Arabi, deprived the Khedive of his authority, disorganized the native administration, destroyed the mechanism by which hitherto order had been maintained after a fashion, and established in its stead a number of institutions on paper, which could be converted into realities only if ensured by a prolonged occupation, we were about to throw up the task we had undertaken and leave the country to its fate—*i. e.*, to a state of confusion closely bordering upon anarchy."

But this programme of evacuation was suddenly abandoned. Mr. Gladstone's Guildhall speech was made on the 9th of November, and on the 20th, news reached London of the entire annihilation in the Soudan of Hicks-Pasha's army of eleven thousand men, and of the defeat and death of Consul Moncrieff at Tokar. The orders already issued for the embarkation of one half of the British army and the withdrawal of the remainder from Cairo to Alexandria were countermanded, and the Soudan suddenly loomed up into formidable prominence, for while England had concentrated all her efforts to suppress Arabi's rebellion, another much more formidable had broken out in the distant regions of the Upper Nile. The easy triumph over the meek *fellaheen* in the holiday campaign of Tel-el-Kebir had been thought the end of the troubles, but now it seemed only the beginning thereof.

A description of the Soudan with its relation to Egypt proper is necessary to a complete understanding of what follows.

In the words of Herodotus, Egypt is the gift (or crea-

tion) of the Nile, for being a rainless country, she depends upon her *only river* for her very existence. The experience of fifty centuries has proved that Egypt can never be safe unless she controls the banks of the Nile at least as far south as Khartoum.

From the sea to the mouth of the Atbara above Berber, a distance of one thousand seven hundred miles, not a single affluent falls into the Nile, and the breadth of its valley above the Delta varies from a mere rocky cañon to a very rare maximum of three to four miles, the average being under two. Three million of people, being nearly one half of the population of Egypt and Nubia, are crowded into that narrow ribbon one thousand five hundred miles long by two in breadth, without any possible outlet, for all the vast spaces east and west (some eight hundred thousand square miles) are THE DESERT.

Vegetation stops just where the waters of the Nile cannot be lifted by irrigation, and the dividing line between that and the desert is as sharply marked as a gravel walk across a grass lawn. Between the Nile and the Red Sea is the *Arabian Desert*, and on the west, extending until it joins the Sahara, is the *Libyan Desert*.

Egypt *proper* extends only to the first cataract at Assouan, about seven hundred miles from the sea (lat.  $24^{\circ} 5'$ ).

Between the first cataract at Assouan and the second cataract at Wady Halfa, the country is called Lower Nubia, and from Wady Halfa (lat.  $22^{\circ}$ ) to New Dongola (lat.  $18^{\circ}$ ) is Upper Nubia.

All the regions south of Dongola are embraced under the name of SOUDAN—an immense and indefinite region, stretching across the entire continent of Africa, on both sides of the equator, and subdivided by geographers into



Eastern, Central, and Western Soudan. The name is derived from the Arabic *aswad*, black, of which the plural is *suda*; so that *Beled-es-Soudan* means simply the country of the blacks, or, as we would call it, *Nigritia*.

The Egyptian Soudan comprises but a small portion of that immense territory. Its most important provinces are Dongola, Kordofan, Darfour, and Bahr-el-Ghazelle, west of the White Nile. Its eastern boundary is the Red Sea down to Massowah; thence the Abyssinian frontier, between which and the White Nile is the large and fertile province of Sennaar. When Gordon was Governor-General of the Soudan (1874–1879), a chain of Egyptian garrisons, of which Gondokoro was the principal, reached as far as the great lakes, all connected by telegraph with Cairo. This region, claimed by the Khedive as part of his dominions, was called the Equatorial Provinces; but in reality it is occupied by warlike negro tribes—Dinkas, Shillooks, Dowers, and others too numerous to mention, and generally participants in the slave-trade either as hunters or hunted; so that the Khedive's authority was limited to a small circle around each military post. Even in time of peace and under Ismail's and Gordon's strong government those tribes would frequently attack small Egyptian detachments, as when they massacred young Linant and his party in 1875. It flattered Ismail's pride to imagine that his empire extended to the lakes, but in fact, beyond Sennaar on the east, and Bahr-el-Ghazelle on the west, the Khedive's authority was purely nominal.

Mehemet-Ali, the great-grandfather of the present Khedive, was a man of eminent abilities, but merciless

and unscrupulous. He had no sooner consolidated his tenure of the vice-regal throne than he resolved to increase his territory. This was impossible within the narrow valley of the lower Nile; but above the arid deserts of Nubia are broad and fertile regions inside of the southern rain-belt, and well watered by the Atbara, the Sobat, and other affluents of the Nile. The so-called island of Meroë was formerly the centre of a civilization older than the Pharaohs. Standing upon the site of the ancient city, I counted no less than forty-two pyramids—smaller, it is true, than those of Gizeh, but of a size to be considered gigantic in any other land. Later still, Meroë was the seat of five populous Christian bishoprics.\* Sennaar, lying between the White and the Blue Niles, possesses a soil of unrivalled fertility and produces wheat, corn, cotton, sugar, and gum in prodigious abundance, beside the *senna* to which it gives its name. Kordofan, on the west of the White Nile, is a sterile and almost waterless region, yet it yields vast quantities of ostrich feathers and the great bulk of the best gum-arabic of the world. But better still, the master of those provinces controls the rich trade of Central Africa—ebony, gold-dust, ivory, indigo, india-rubber, and above all, slaves. A pretext was easily found, and in 1822 Mehemet-Ali had achieved the conquest of Sennaar and Kordofan. Until that time the country had been ruled by numberless Sultans, as they called themselves, and its condition

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\* A fact mentioned by early historians and confirmed by the researches of Monsignor Daniele Comboni, Bishop of Nigritia, a most accomplished Arabic scholar and archeologist. He was a native of Verona, a man of splendid presence, genial nature, and the most liberal-minded priest I ever met. He accompanied me on my return journey from El Obeid through Khartoum, Berber, and Suakim to Cairo, and he died in Kordofan in 1881, in the prime of middle life, a victim to the murderous climate.



from time immemorial had been one of continual rapine, anarchy, and savagery. Commerce could hardly be said to exist, for caravans had to pay heavy tributes to every robber chief, and even this did not always secure their lives and property from attacks by roving bands of Bedouins. Striking mementoes of that period of brigandage are the ruins of ancient castles seen on many basaltic islands rising one or two hundred feet above the river-bed. Some, like the feudal fortresses on the Rhine (which they so much resemble), were once the strongholds of bandit chiefs, whence they could spy out the approach of their prey; while others served as refuges in which the agricultural population stored their crops to save them from the raids of the desert nomads.

Mehemet-Ali's conquest was accompanied by fearful cruelties on both sides. I have stood at Shendy upon the very spot where Mehemet's son, Ismail, was roasted to death with all his chief officers and a portion of his troops. Ismail had made extortionate demands for gold, slaves, and forage upon the local Sultan, *el Nimr* (the Tiger), and had struck him across the face with his pipe-stem because the forage fell short. The crafty chief retired humbly from his presence, promising that an abundance would be supplied before morning. All the afternoon and evening immense quantities were piled all around the quarter of the town where Ismail and his troops were holding high revel. But an hour before daylight the stacks were simultaneously fired at every point, and the doomed Turco-Egyptians found themselves surrounded by a circle of flames from which none escaped, for el Nimr with his Nubians stood outside and shot down or speared every one who attempted

to break the fiery barrier. To avenge his son's death, Mehemet-Ali sent another army under his son-in-law—the famous *Defterdar* (so-called from his office of registrar or treasurer), whose name still lives in Egyptian traditions on account of his fiendish cruelties. This army of Asiatic Turks showed little mercy to African barbarians. More than 100,000 people were slaughtered between Abou Hamed and Khartoum, and a still larger number, chiefly boys and young women, were sent down as slaves to Lower Egypt. The bloody memories of the conquest were never forgotten, but so thorough had it been that sixty years elapsed without a general attempt at rebellion.

Even the worst evils are often followed by good results. By degrees, order, defective as it might be, arose from absolute chaos. Mehemet-Ali visited the Soudan and his military eye perceived at one glance the strategic importance of the point of land at the junction of the White and the Blue Niles. There he founded Khartoum (lat. 15° 30') and made it the capital of the Soudan provinces, with a government palace, extensive barracks for troops, an arsenal, a ship-yard, and a growing population which, in 1876, had increased to more than 40,000. A despotic and often cruel government, establishing strong garrisons at important points, commanded peace and enforced obedience. Commerce, agriculture, and industry took the place of pillage and murder, and were efficiently protected though heavily taxed. Famines which were the frequent consequence of continual wars and rapine, disappeared after a government strong and regular, even if arbitrary and tyrannical, had given the husbandman an assurance of reaping the crop which he had planted.



Every thing in this world is relative. What would be an intolerable government for France or England may be very acceptable to a semi-civilized population, especially if it is better than any thing they have experienced before. I explored the greater part of the Soudan—the deserts between the Nile and the Red Sea from Kenneh to Suakim, as well as Kordofan on the west of the Nile. Altogether I spent two years travelling 6,000 miles on camel-back among the most numerous and powerful Bedouin tribes now in insurrection, and visiting all the principal cities—Berber, Dongola, Debbé, El Obeïd, Khartoum, Suakim, etc., etc. In all my explorations I had the best opportunities, and I made it a point to examine the condition of the country and the people. There were certainly no reasons to bias my judgment, and I give now the result of my experience and observations.

Everywhere I found the primary element of civilization and without which none can exist,—*submission to law*. It may be thought a crude and defective law, but it possesses the advantage of the universal assent of the people, being based upon the Koran, which on the whole, is a humane and equitable code. Life and property were safer than in our own wild border lands. Of that ruffianism which makes a hero of a bandit like Jesse James and glorifies the monster who has killed a score of men in private brawls, there was not a trace. Murders were rare and generally punished with death. I remember seeing at El Obeïd the body of a murderer hanging from the gallows on the market-place. He had been convicted after a regular trial before the Cadi, but it was not until the case had been carefully revised by the

highest tribunal and the sentence approved by the Khedive himself that he was executed; for no provincial governor was authorized to carry out a capital sentence, except Gen. Gordon, upon whom the powers of life and death had been conferred by special firman for the purpose of suppressing the slave trade. Even the wild Bedouins, fierce nomads without fixed habitations, and yielding only a limited allegiance, had been compelled to abandon the plundering habits of their forefathers, and their sheikhs were held answerable with their heads for the safety of life, travel, and property throughout their deserts. In many thousand miles of travel among the now rebellious tribes, the Bishareens, Hassaneeyehs, Kababeesh, and others, I have met hundreds of caravans loaded, some with the most valuable products of Central Africa, others with European goods going to the interior. The commerce thus carried on by land, exclusive of the river trade, amounted to twenty-five or thirty millions of dollars a year. Yet no caravan, large or small, needed the protection of an armed escort, and all travelled in perfect safety under the charge of unarmed camel-drivers and the half-dozen merchants owning the goods. The certainty of swift and stern punishment by the Khedive's government, known to possess irresistible power to inflict it, was sufficient to guarantee security to all.

In Kordofan, one of the remote provinces, European as well as native merchants carried on an active trade by means of the electric telegraph, which reached to Darfour and the lakes, and they regulated their transactions by the daily quotations of ivory, gum and ostrich feathers at Cairo and Alexandria. This fact came under my personal observation at El Obeïd, as well as the following.



A branch of the great Austro-Italian Roman-Catholic mission at Khartoum was established at El Obeïd, consisting of twelve or fifteen priests and sisters. In that city of thirty thousand people, of whom two thirds were Mussulmans and the rest heathen negroes, priests and nuns in their distinctive costumes were daily seen plying their vocation absolutely unmolested in any way, though I cannot say that they made any converts, except the little boys and girls whom they purchased in infancy and taught in their school, and who continued good Christians so long as they were clothed and fed—and no longer. There were also some other branch missions far away from the protection of the garrison at El Obeïd, and they remained unmolested until the Mahdi captured that city, when twelve members were held for ransom and released upon payment of seventy thousand dollars by the Austrian consul at Khartoum. I can assert with truth that wherever an Egyptian garrison could enforce its authority, life and property were reasonably well protected, far better than could have been expected in such distant regions, and among a semi-barbarous people.

Yet I do not pretend to say that even under Ismaïl the Soudan was an Arcadia. By no means! For some years after the conquest, the military governors, all Turks, were cruel and rapacious, and confirmed the hatred for Turkish officials so deeply implanted in the Soudanese heart, and embracing all Egyptians whom they regard as Turks. But for the last thirty years, a milder *régime* had gradually prevailed. It cannot be denied, however, that the rapacity of the governors and their subordinates could never be entirely checked at such a distance from the seat of government at Cairo. The peasant or laborer

had to pay in extortions nearly as much again as the just amount of taxes which found its way to the government chest. But yet he had enough left to live easily in his frugal way, and was secure in the enjoyment of this surplus; whereas, before the conquest he never knew when war or the roving Bedouins would rob him of his sustenance and his life. No doubt there were numerous cases of wrong and oppression. Traders frequently had to pay heavy backsheesh to avoid worse extortion; but, after all, the government gave them the protection without which they could not have carried on their trade at all. Many poor wretches received the kourbash to force from them the payment of their taxes; but it was a point of honor with them, and they would have been branded as cowards by their fellows if they had paid up before taking as many strokes as they could bear. A civilized people is ruled by moral suasion, not, however, without severe penalties to enforce its laws; but barbarians cannot be controlled without a good deal of brute force. Full allowance being made for taxation and extortion, the population did not have to bear nearly so heavy a burden as that laid upon the Irish people in rents alone; nor had they to contend with evictions and starvation. The mildness of the climate making clothing and shelter almost a superfluity, the fertility of the cultivated land, and the increase of their flocks combine to procure to the Egyptian and Soudanese people a far easier life than falls to the lot of the peasantry of Ireland and all northern Europe. If law, order, and a regular government, even though defective, are preferable to anarchy, brigandage and incessant war, the Soudan was in vastly better condition under Ismail-Pasha than it had ever been before the



conquest. And be it remembered that the only alternative is between this imperfect but strong government, and a return to the former chaos and savagery ; for the Soudanese, if left to themselves, must inevitably fall under the rule of numerous rival chiefs of slave-traders, of whom Abou-Saoud, Zobeir-Pasha, and Osman-Digma are representative types.

Such, then, was the condition of the Soudan under Gordon's administration before the deposition of Ismaïl ; and it cannot be denied that that country enjoyed many benefits of an incipient civilization, destined to increase and develop if its government remained undisturbed.

But no government can be supported without taxation, and an ignorant people are unable to realize that the protection they receive is far more than an equivalent return for the taxes which they pay. It is not astonishing therefore that the Soudanese lost sight of the advantages they enjoyed in the security for life and industry, and considered all taxation as robbery. In the memory of their fathers, time had been when no governors and soldiers were sent to make them pay tribute to a Turkish viceroy at Cairo. The traditions of the cruel conquest with fire and sword sixty years before still lingered among the people, and it told them of the days when they were subject only to their own native sultans. With the natural tendency of a primitive people to extol "the good old times," they forgot that those petty despots were the absolute and unsparing masters of the lives and property of their subjects, and kept the country in a state of perpetual strife and devastation. These memories, kept alive by the extortions of some rapacious officials, nursed

the race-hatred of the Soudanese for the Egyptians, but with the great mass of the people it was a passive sentiment which would remain dormant unless aroused by exciting causes.

A much more active and dangerous element of discontent was found in the large and powerful class engaged in the slave-trade, that curse of Africa probably as old as the negro race with which it seems to be an innate instinct; for as Sir Samuel Baker remarks, the first impulse of a freed negro, as soon as he has a chance, is to acquire a slave of his own. That this trade existed in the days of the Pharaohs is placed beyond doubt by the images of chain-gangs of negro slaves carved upon their monuments.

The strength and magnitude of the slave-hunting and slave-trading organizations cannot be appreciated without a description of their system of operations.

An enterprising adventurer starts with a capital of £1,000 which, if he has it not, he can always borrow in Khartoum at 100 per cent. interest. He enlists 150 men from the thousands of slave-hunting soldiers and desperadoes who swarm in Khartoum and Dongola, eager for such employment. He supplies them with fire-arms and abundant ammunition; he buys a few hundred pounds of glass beads and a few hundred yards of coarse cotton fabrics for presents and barter. He charts six or eight Nile-boats and leaves Khartoum about the 1st of December. Sailing some five hundred miles or more up the White Nile, he lands at some eligible point and penetrates into the interior. First he begins to trade for elephants' tusks, but this is only a preliminary to more serious business. He invariably finds some negro chief at enmity with another and anxious to secure an ally so



well provided with fire-arms. A bargain is soon concluded, and they make a joint night-attack upon the enemy's villages, setting the straw huts on fire. All the warriors who resist are shot down with musketry as they rush out of their blazing homes. The rest, together with the women and children are captured, as well as the cattle still coralled in the zeribas.\* The negro chief is delighted, for his enemy is "wiped out," and he himself is rewarded with fifty or one hundred cattle and three or four handsome slave girls. He and his people covet cattle above all things, and the trader has captured probably some two thousand head which he proceeds to barter for ivory—a cow for a tusk, which is all profit since the cows have cost him nothing. When no more ivory is to be had, the trader usually picks a quarrel with his late allies who in their turn are murdered or enslaved, their women, children, and the coveted cattle being added to the previously acquired booty.

In an average season, a party one hundred and fifty strong will secure ivory to the amount of £5,000. The men are paid their wages in cattle and slaves which have cost nothing, and receive in addition one third of the stolen cattle, leaving some four or five hundred slaves worth five or six pounds per head for the trader's own profit. These he crowds into his boats, guarded by a few of his men, while the rest establish zeribas from which they raid the country all around and procure more slaves for the time when their leader returns the next year with a larger force.

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\* This word, of frequent occurrence hereafter, is spelled variously—zaribah, zeriba, etc., in the attempt to represent its true sound, which is zah-reē-bah, with accent on middle syllable. It means an enclosure, generally of thorny brush-wood, or a stockade.

Meanwhile the slaver sails back down the Nile and is met at safe points by the regular slave-merchants called *jellabs*, mostly Arabs, waiting to purchase the slaves for ready cash. These unfortunates are now marched off by various routes, avoiding the Egyptian garrisons, some down the Nile, others across the deserts to the Red Sea, multitudes perishing by the way. The survivors find a ready market in Egypt, Arabia, Turkey, Persia, and all the Mussulman provinces of Asia, while the successful adventurer returns with his ivory and gold to Khartoum, already a rich man. There he repays his loan with interest, purchases fresh supplies for the men he left behind, enlists more followers, and starts back the following December to operate year after year upon an ever-increasing scale.

The practical working of this system is fully illustrated by the career of the notorious Zobeir-Pasha who rose from a common slave-hunting hireling to a conqueror, and narrowly missed becoming a king.

He was of that turbulent Dongola race who take to slave-hunting as naturally as a duck to water, and he began his career as a mere enlisted mercenary; but before long he started on his own account, and possessing a natural aptitude for organizing and commanding men, his zeribas were soon numbered by scores, forming a chain of fortified posts extending more than a thousand miles beyond Khartoum. Around his head-quarters at Shaka a town grew up as large as El Obeid, and there he kept up a royal state, with a body-guard, and chained live lions in his audience-hall. Dr. Schweinfurth states that in 1871 no less than 2,700 *jellabs* visited that place to buy the numerous slaves Zobeir had captured and



collected there. Having devastated all the surrounding regions, his base of supplies was then the powerful kingdom of Darfour; but Zobeir having incurred the enmity of its monarch, the latter forbade the exportation of the grain without which the slavers could not subsist. From his numerous zeribas Zobeir assembled an army of twelve or fifteen thousand men, and in a great battle at Menowatshee, in 1874, he defeated and killed Sultan Ibrahim and his two sons, thus extinguishing a dynasty which had ruled over Darfour for four hundred years. If let alone, he would have seized the vacant throne, but the Khedive Ismail was too far-sighted to permit a chief who once before had defied his power and attacked his troops, to become an independent king. So he sent a regular army, too strong to be resisted, to complete the subjugation of Darfour so nearly accomplished by Zobeir. The latter, making a virtue of necessity, turned over his conquest to the Khedive, expecting in return to be made Governor-General of Western Soudan. His hopes were encouraged, and he was invited to Cairo. But before going there he assembled his lieutenants at Shaka, and made them take a solemn oath upon the Koran to obey whatever orders he might send them from Cairo. Arrived there, he was made a pasha and assigned a pension of £100 a month. He had brought with him £100,000 in gold, which he vainly expended in urging his claims. He was treated with great honor, but kept in a sort of gilded captivity. Disappointed and irritated, he sent secret orders to his son Suleiman to summon all his followers to rebel against Gordon, and in a short time Suleiman raised ten or twelve thousand men, far better fighters than Gordon's troops, and secretly supplied by

Zobehr with money, arms, and ammunition. This rebellion was not suppressed until twelve battles had been fought by Romulo Gessi, Gordon's valiant lieutenant,—killed some years later fighting another rebellion of slave-hunters. Suleiman himself was captured and Gessi had him tried and shot for treason, with Gordon's approval, and among his papers were found Zobehr's letters inciting the rebellion. The latter was imprisoned for some months, then released, though still forbidden to leave Cairo, but not deprived of his honors and pension. When Gordon, in 1884, found his position at Khartoum untenable, he urged the British authorities to send Zobehr to succeed him, as being the only man able to organize a government and prevent utter anarchy, but his record was too black, and the authorities wisely refused to trust him.

Zobehr was only one of many powerful slave-hunting warrior-chiefs. Another was Abou-Saoud who also raised a rebellion, and after causing much trouble, made terms and was received back into favor. Yusuf who did the same, was made a pasha and was exterminated with six thousand men by the Mahdi, in Sennaar. Another was Osman-Digma who has done such splendid fighting near the Red Sea, and is still continuing the war against the British. In fact, slave-hunting is war on a barbarous and often extensive scale, and its leaders have to possess no inconsiderable military capacity.

The slave-trade was the only one that flourished before Mehemet-Ali's conquest, and it continued to flourish unhindered until General Gordon's appointment as Governor-General of the Soudan (1874–1879). From the de-

scription given above of the *modus operandi* of the slave-hunters, it is evident that the number slain in the raids or left to starve after the destruction of all their subsistence must nearly equal those reduced to slavery; and of the latter, at least one third perished by the way, although none but the young and able-bodied were considered worth carrying away. In spite of this frightful mortality, not less than three hundred thousand slaves were annually brought down the Nile and across the deserts from Central Africa. Baker, Schweinfurth, and other African explorers bear witness to the devastation produced by this hellish brigandage which reduced to absolute deserts provinces as large as France and Germany, and that had formerly supported a numerous population. One of Ismail-Pasha's strongest claims to the sympathy of the civilized world is the vigorous and earnest attempt he made to suppress this atrocious crime. He gave Gordon orders to annihilate it by the sternest exercise of military force, and invested him with unlimited powers for that purpose. The effort was only partly successful, for it is impossible to change in a few years the customs and traditions of centuries, although Gordon's sub-governors were afraid to disregard his instructions, and many slave caravans were intercepted and confiscated for having ventured too near the Egyptian garrisons. This fact came to my personal knowledge at El Obeïd, where I was detained several months by the effects of the deadly climate which shattered my health for ever and killed a number of my comrades and escort. That city was the residence of the governor of the province of Kordofan, and in peace times was garrisoned by some three thousand Soudanese troops. More



than once I saw gangs of slaves just released from the traders, being marched down to the barracks by an Egyptian sergeant to be enrolled as recruits. They were great, tall fellows, emaciated by fatigue and starvation, and all just as perfectly naked as they were born. They walked in single file, each one fastened to the next by a piece of wood about five feet long, reaching from the back of the neck of the first man to the throat of the next behind him. Thus they had marched hundreds of miles, never released for an instant except when one would drop dead and be left for the vultures and hyenas. Perhaps half of them had perished by the way, and it was impossible to send back the rest to their country. So the government made soldiers of them and gave them the women slaves for wives. This had at least the effect of discouraging the slave-trade by the confiscation of the merchandise. These fellows as soon as enrolled were clothed in a good white cotton uniform, fed on fair rations of bread and meat, better than they ever had before in their lives. They were taught Arabic and the Mohammedan religion of which they soon became zealous proselytes. They learned military drill and discipline very promptly and perfectly. These Soudanese regiments formed of men who had been warriors in their own country, not only looked very soldier-like, but they were greatly superior as fighters to the troops recruited from the meek and peace-loving fellahen of Lower Egypt.

But the current was too strong to be entirely stopped, and it sought secret channels out of reach of governors and garrisons. I was at Khartoum in 1876, during Gordon's governorship—but at that particular time he

was on a tour of inspection to Gondokoro and the lakes. I made many inquiries and obtained much information from the Austrian Consul, who was in full sympathy with Gordon, and he told me that it was true that slave caravans were no longer brought to Khartoum, and that the traders had to seek concealment. "But," added he—"if you wanted to purchase a hundred boys or a hundred girls, they can be procured and delivered to you at a safe place in twenty-four hours for \$35 to \$50 per head." Nevertheless, it is believed that under Gordon's rule the annual importation from Central Africa was reduced from three hundred thousand to less than one hundred thousand, and in the attainment of this result, great numbers of the traders were financially ruined, and hundreds of the slave-hunting soldiers caught red-handed were shot—"pour encourager les autres." It must be kept in mind, however, that this warfare was carried on against slave-hunting only. In the nature of things no interference could be attempted or was desired with regard to domestic slavery as it existed in Egypt and the Soudan.

As a natural and inevitable consequence, all the powerful class of slave-hunters, together with all those who derived profit from the slave-trade, such as jellabs, usurers, furnishers of supplies, bandits and adventurers, were driven to desperation by restraints which meant ruin to them, and they were ready for revolution.

But far more formidable than all the rest, if once aroused into hostility, were the half million of Bedouins roaming the deserts east and west of the Nile, of whom every male above fifteen is a warrior. They are of different blood from the people of Egypt and the Soudan,

their ancestors having crossed over the Red Sea from Arabia long before the Christian era, and they have mingled but little with other races. They are true Ishmaelites, and exhibit the characteristics of the Arab race, being slender, of medium size, well formed, with small hands and feet and arched instep, varying in color from olive to dark bronze, and with straight aquiline features. They are proud, indomitable, and prefer independence to life itself. Having but few wants, their deserts supply them with nearly all that they need. They are nomads whose wealth consists of flocks and camels, living where agriculture is impossible, and scorning the inhabitants of towns as "dwellers among bricks." Even Mehemet-Ali's iron hand could extort from them only the most limited allegiance. Though born-warriors, they never submitted to conscription, and they paid tribute to the Khedive because they found it to their interest to do so, being granted in return the monopoly of the carrying trade across their country, and allowed to retain their patriarchal form of government under their great sheikhs, who can trace their origin even beyond the days of the Prophet.\* On these the Khedive bestowed high rank, privileges, and revenues on the condition of their insuring the peace and safety of trade and travel through their territories, and this they did so effectually that, as I stated before, no caravan needed an armed escort. The principal Bedouin tribes are the Ababdehs, Bishareens, and Hadendowas, on the east of the Nile; the Has-

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\* In my first lecture, published by the American Geographical Society in 1880, "Life in the Egyptian Deserts," I gave a very complete description of the manner and customs of the Bedouin tribes. We are compelled to write Arab names as they sound, hence the diversity in spelling them by English, French, Italian and German writers.



saneeyehs, Kababeesh, and Baggáras, on the west. All the tribes wear the same costume, which for the common people consists of a few yards of coarse white cotton cloth wound around the waist and legs to the knees, with sandals for their feet. The upper part of the body is exposed to the burning rays of the sun, mitigated only by the abundant grease with which they plaster their hair, and which melts and flows upon their breasts and shoulders. They all go bare-headed at all times, even when on the march the thermometer registers 150° or 160°, with the fierce African sun vertical over their heads and the burning sand under their feet. Stranger than all, while some of the tribes arrange their hair in thick cushions, six or eight inches high, others shave their heads and seem to suffer no inconvenience from an exposure which would kill a European, or even an Egyptian in fifteen minutes. All the Bedouins go armed at all times, their equipment consisting of shields of hippopotamus or giraffe hide, lances, and the broad, straight, double-edged, two-handed swords with which they make their headlong charges. Feuds are frequent among the sub-tribes, and their internal quarrels, of which the Egyptian government took no notice, always kept alive their warlike spirit. It is from these tribes that the Madhi and Osman Digma obtained the great mass of their best and bravest soldiers.

With such elements it is evident that the Soudan was like a train of powder which a single spark might fire at any moment. Yet no general rebellion would have been attempted so long as the Khedive's government retained its power and prestige. But just at that time occurred a remarkable combination of circumstances.

1st. Ismaïl-Pasha's strong personality was eliminated by his forced abdication.

2d. Gordon deprived of Ismaïl's unlimited support, and disgusted at the complaints of the British commissioners at Cairo, because, under his upright administration, the Soudan no longer yielded a surplus, resigned his office and his successor, Raouf-Pasha, reëstablished the old abuses.

3d. The Egyptian government was disorganized and its army destroyed by foreign interference and by Arabi's rebellion.

4th. The iniquitous bombardment of Alexandria aroused the dormant Mussulman fanaticism, and the British occupation of Lower Egypt impressed the Soudanese with the idea that the Khedive had sold his country to Christian foreigners.

The natural consequence was that all the bonds which had kept the Soudan in subjection were loosened at once. Gordon himself had warned Ismaïl, when invested by him with unlimited powers, that when he left, it would never again be possible to return to the old *régime*, and this explains the expression he used later: "I laid the egg which hatched the Mahdi."

It is worthy of notice that no rebellion could have succeeded which did not appeal to the passions or interests of *all* classes. The slavers' grievances had awakened no interest in the Bedouins of the desert or the tillers of the soil. Therefore Zobeir, Abou-Saoud, and Yusuf had been defeated. Other Mahdis had appeared from time to time, but appealing only to religious fanaticism, they had been easily crushed. But now only a leader was wanted who could unite *all* the elements of discon-

tent under a common standard, and at the most critical and opportune moment the leader arose.

In the town of New-Dongola, on the west bank of the Nile, some forty-four years ago, was born a Nubian boy with all the characteristics of his race; a tall, well-proportioned form, dark-brown complexion, straight features, long and crisp, but not woolly hair. His name was Mohammed-Achmet, and his occupation in youth that of a carpenter and boat-builder. Before reaching manhood he resolved to become a *fakir*, and for this purpose he learned to read and write. The fakirs (Arab plural, *fokarah*) are a class who may be considered as half priests, half laymen. They are the school-teachers of Mussulman countries, and the instruction they impart is limited to reading and writing Arabic and learning by heart as much of the Koran as possible. They are also the expounders of the Koran which is not only the religious but also the civil and political law of Islam, so that they are to some extent the lawyers of the country; nor are they without medical pretensions, though their practice consists mainly in charms and the use of written texts of the Koran applied to the person of the patient or taken internally. A great portion of their income is derived from the sale of amulets supposed to protect the wearer against bullets and wild beasts, and the crops and flocks from the evil-eye.\* Their influence over the superstitious masses is immense. They are always called

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\* One of the Egyptian staff-lieutenants attached to my expedition, a graduate of the Cairo Military School, quite intelligent, a fair mathematician and surveyor, reading and speaking French fluently, but a devout Mussulman, wore an amulet composed of leaves of desert plants, the hair of a hyena, a piece of serpent-skin, the whole wrapped in a piece of parchment on which was a text of the Koran written by a fakir. This talisman, he assured me in all seriousness, rendered him invulnerable to all attacks of wild beasts as well as to the influence of the "evil-eye."



sheikhs (elders), and are treated with great reverence, which is still increased by their affectation of superior sanctity.

It was not long before Sheikh Achmet, by his display of extraordinary piety, acquired the reputation of a holy dervish, a grade above that of fakir, and corresponding somewhat to the mendicant friars of Catholic countries. There was an ancient tradition among Mussulmans, that about the end of the thirteenth century of the Hegira (1882-3) a prophet would arise who would restore the glories of Islam and conquer the whole world. It was prophesied that this *Mahdi* (derived from *huda*, to lead—*Mahdi*, led by God) would be named Mohammed, would be a carpenter by trade, would have only four fingers on his left hand, and certain moles or marks upon his face. By accident or design, Mohammed-Achmet while working at his trade had chopped off a finger of his left hand, and he claimed that his face bore the signs indicated by the prophecy. To increase his reputation for holiness, he retired to a cave in the island of Aba above Khartoum and became a hermit, pretending in the approved style of prophets to have visions and revelations from God. He was living there in comparative obscurity, evolving himself into a Mahdi when I passed not far from his retreat in 1876.

There can be no doubt that he was a man of uncommon shrewdness and ambition, and that he kept himself fully informed of all the events occurring in Lower Egypt. The wonderful rapidity with which news travels through mysterious channels in Mussulman countries is a well-established fact. In this way the disaffection of the army and people, the forced abdication of Ismaïl-

Pasha, the dictatorship of England and France, and the *pronunciamento* of Arabi-Pasha were known in the Soudan two weeks after they occurred, in spite of the official suppression of all adverse intelligence by telegraph. It is a significant fact that the first military rising that brought Arabi to the front took place in February, 1881, and that as early as July of the same year, Mohammed-Achmet proclaimed his mission. Raouf-Pasha, then governor of the Soudan, received at Khartoum, early in August, a message from him to this effect :

“*Bismillah, er rachman, er raheem!*—In the name of God, the gracious, the merciful! Blessings be on the Lord Mohammed and his race! . . . This is sent by the servant of the Lord, Mohammed-Achmet, the son of Abd-Allah. . . . God has said in His only book [the Koran]: ‘Oh ye that believe, I will show you a way by which you may be saved from great troubles; only believe in God and in His messenger, and fight the Lord’s battles with your goods and your bodies. And know this and hold it fast: that God has called me to be a Caliph, and that the Prophet (whom God bless!) has proclaimed that I am the expected Mahdi, and has placed me upon his throne above princes and nobles. And God has strengthened me by His angels and prophets, and by the elect and believers among the Djinns [the genii or demons, some of whom the Mussulmans believe to have been converted to Islam]. And He has also said, God has given thee signs of thy mission, namely the moles on thy left cheek. And another sign He has given me, that out of the fire appears a standard which will be with me in the hour of battle, carried by the angel Azraël, whom God bless! And He has also told me that whoever does

not believe in me does not believe in Him or His prophets. Whoever fights against me will be destroyed in this world and the next, and his goods and his children will be a prey to the believers !”

After this preamble, he summoned all governors and peoples to submit to his authority and join his standard for the destruction of all Christians, foreigners, and Turks, and the conquest of the entire country. He further proclaimed the abolition of all debts and taxes, and promised that all who fell in battle in his cause would enter at once upon the enjoyment of the delights of the Mussulman paradise.

At first, Raouf-Pasha tried persuasion and sent the ex-rebel Abou-Saoud to the island of Aba. The Mahdi, as he was now called, received him surrounded by several hundred men in coats of mail and drawn swords. When Abou-Saoud represented to him the madness of rising against the government which possessed soldiers, breech-loaders, cannon and steamers, the Mahdi replied : “ If the soldiers shoot at me and my people, their bullets will do us no harm ; and if they attack us with steamers, both steamers and cannon will sink together.”

Negotiations failing to produce submission, Raouf reluctantly had recourse to force, but he made the mistake of underestimating the importance of the incipient rebellion. On the tenth of August, 1881, he sent three hundred regulars and one cannon on two steamers under Abou-Saoud. This force would have been more than sufficient if the soldiers had not been inclined to believe in the Mahdi's divine mission. When they landed and met the Mahdi, they refused to fire at the “ holy man ” : —nevertheless the holy man and his people killed one



hundred and thirty of the soldiers, and the rest fled in terror to their steamers. The gunner was ordered to fire the cannon at the Mahdi, who was sitting on horseback a short distance from the shore, but in his excitement and terror he fired wide of the mark, and the Mahdi coolly turning his horse rode quietly away, while the discomfited expedition returned in dismay to Khartoum. This first success over the government troops gained for the Mahdi much prestige and a large increase of followers.

In December following, the governor of Fashoda, a Kurd named Rashid-Bey, advanced against the Mahdi with four hundred regulars and two thousand Shillooks. A short and fierce battle was fought at Jebel Gedir, in which the governor and all his troops and nearly all the Shillooks with their king were slaughtered by the Baggáras. All the Remington rifles and ammunition of the regulars and a large quantity of supplies fell into the hands of the Mahdi, who captured Fashoda, an important military post on the White Nile. This second victory was followed by the accession of several considerable tribes. To the powerful and fierce Baggáras, who had already joined the Mahdi's standard, were now added the Kababeesh and Hassaneeyehs in Kordofan and the Abou-Rof in Senaar, while the Ababdehs and Bishareens, between the Nile and the Red Sea, were ready to rise at the approach of the Mahdi who sent emissaries everywhere with the ominous message: "Be ready, I am coming!"

In the meantime Raouf-Pasha was superseded, and Giegler-Pasha, a talented Bavarian engineer, with whom I had become well acquainted in Kordofan, was left in

temporary command until the arrival of Abd-el-Kader, the new governor-general. The situation was very critical, for nearly the entire Soudan was rising; but Giegler who had been vice-governor since Gordon's time displayed great energy. He enlisted and organized a considerable force from the Chiaggias, Dongolaweas, and other tribes which still remained loyal to the government. To these were joined about fifteen hundred regulars. This army, well armed and equipped by Giegler's care, and numbering nearly six thousand men, started up the Nile about the middle of March, 1882, for Jebel Gedir. Their commander was Yusuf, formerly a great slave-hunting chief, who had killed Munza, the king of Monbuttu.\* Later he had rebelled against the Egyptian government, by whom he was pardoned and received back into favor. He had commanded Egyptians under Gessi in the rebellion of Zobeir's son Suleiman, and had contributed to Gessi's victories, for which service he had been made a pasha. In June news reached Khartoum that Yusuf-Pasha with his entire force had been annihilated by the Mahdi into whose hands fell all their arms, ammunition, and a vast amount of supplies. As usual in those desert battles, only a mere handful of the vanquished escaped to tell the story of the disaster. The consternation of the European and Egyptian population of Khartoum and Berber was extreme, and with good reason, for before mid-summer Darfour was entirely lost, while Kordofan and Senaar were in great danger, although Egyptian garrisons still held Bara and El Obeid, the capital of Kordofan, and the city of Senaar, the capital of the province of that name.

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\* See Schweinfurth's "Heart of Africa" for an account of King Munza.

It was at this juncture that the new governor-general, Abd-el-Kader-Pasha, arrived at Khartoum. He was an accomplished officer who had received several years' training in the Imperial Military School of Vienna. He was a Turk by birth and a man of splendid, soldier-like presence. He had held a high command of Egyptian troops during the Turco-Russian war in 1877-'78, and on several occasions had given proof of military skill and much personal bravery. One of his first measures was to abolish the government monopoly on all articles of trade except ivory, and to endeavor to allay dissatisfaction and revive trade by lowering tariffs and promising a regular steamer service on both Niles. But these reforms came too late, for nearly the entire Soudan was already in arms.

Abd-el-Kader lost no time in organizing means of defence. No troops could be drawn from Lower Egypt where Arabi's rebellion was at its height. Abd-el-Kader had but a few companies of Soudanese regulars. He enlisted several thousand Chiaggias and Dongolaweas and formed them into regiments fairly armed and equipped. He strengthened his position at Khartoum by erecting a substantial line of earthworks defended by artillery. His force was also augmented by many irregulars drawn from the Bedouin tribes still faithful to the Khedive.

If any illusions had existed as to the formidable character of the Mahdi's rebellion, they should have been dispelled by the events now taking place. It had been generally believed up to this time that the Mahdi's victories were due to accidental causes, and that if he should meet with a serious disaster, his followers would forsake him



and his power would suddenly collapse. But this expectation was totally disappointed. The Mahdi's forces were repeatedly defeated, but he seemed to gather new strength after each repulse. On the 24th of June he attacked Bara, near El Obeïd, and was driven off with great slaughter. On the 28th of August his relative and lieutenant, Amr-el-Makashef, attacked Duem on the Nile above Khartoum, with fourteen thousand men. The town was well fortified and garrisoned by five hundred Egyptians. The attack lasted four hours, until three thousand rebels had fallen under the withering fire of the Remington breech-loaders. The remnant of this force retreated to Sennaar and was again defeated by Salah-Aga, and Amr-el-Makashef was killed; but the main body succeeded in crossing the White Nile and joining the Mahdi who had invaded Kordofan after the destruction of Yusuf-Pasha's army.

On the 8th of September, 1882, the Mahdi re-inforced by the accession of the Hassaneeyeh and Kababeesh tribes, appeared at the head of sixty thousand warriors before El Obeïd which had been well fortified and was defended by a garrison of six thousand regulars, and twelve pieces of artillery. A furious attack was made at daybreak of the 9th. The rebels' charge upon the outer works was so desperate that the soldiers gave way and retreated upon the inner line. The enemy rushed after them in hand-to-hand fight and would have entered the place pell-mell with them; but Iskander-Bey, the Egyptian commander, exhibited rare coolness and decision. He concentrated a heavy fire of rifles and artillery upon the struggling mass of the enemy and of his own soldiers, killing three hundred of the lat-

ter, but saving the town. On the 11th and the 14th the Mahdi's troops again stormed the works with desperate valor, opposing only swords and spears to the terrible fire of breech-loaders and artillery; until fifteen thousand men (one fourth of his army) lay dead or dying before the walls of El Obeïd. After this enormous loss, the Mahdi sullenly retired to re-organize his shattered forces. It is a noteworthy coincidence that at the very same time (September 12, 1882) Arabi-Pasha was defeated with very feeble resistance at Tel-el-Kebir.

The terrible reverse at El Obeïd would probably have ended the career of a leader of ordinary capacity. Not so with the Mahdi; it only proved his formidable power and tenacity of purpose. Allowing his followers only time enough to go home and secure their crop of dourah, he returned in December with one hundred thousand men, captured Bara, and then laid siege to El Obeïd, which surrendered on the 17th of January, 1883, after an heroic resistance. Every article of food had been consumed, including even dogs. The soldiers had eaten their leather-straps, and the starving population rose in desperation to demand submission to the Mahdi. All the inhabitants, not excepting the Christian Syrian and Greek merchants, acknowledged him as a prophet, and the garrison with the gallant Iskander-Bey joined his ranks, professing conversion to full belief in his divine mission as proved by his astonishing success. The greatest wonder is that they should have resisted so long a prophet who appealed so strongly to their religious traditions and sympathies. Among the captives were the members of the Catholic mission. The Mahdi treated them well in spite of the failure of his arguments to convert them, and

finally liberated them upon the payment of a ransom by the Austrian Consul at Khartoum.

This signal victory produced an immense effect throughout the Soudan. The Mahdi was now in possession of the capital of Kordofan, the largest city west of the Nile. Darfour and Kordofan were completely in his power, Senaar nearly so, and the tribes which had wavered in their allegiance now recognized in him the true Madhi sent of God to break the yoke of Turks and infidels. The material results of his success were the accession of the conquered garrison (some five or six thousand brave and trained soldiers), the capture of a large number of breech-loaders, twelve pieces of artillery, and a large supply of ammunition. El Obeïd became his capital and his base of operations until Khartoum fell into his hands. Already the latter city was threatened by Bedouin raids, and numerous secret emissaries were inciting the people to rebellion.

Such was the condition of affairs in the Soudan at the beginning of 1883. The attention of the Khedive and his government had been so concentrated upon the suppression of Arabi's rebellion that they had overlooked the Mahdi's. It was only after the capture of El-Obeïd that they realized the extreme gravity of the situation. But they were now entirely helpless. The Khedive naturally applied for aid to his self-appointed guardians and protectors, but he was answered that British interests being in no way involved in the Soudan, England would give him no assistance. Yet, at that moment, a little help would probably have checked the rebellion before it became too strong. With the British army of occupation were several Anglo-Indian regiments accustomed to



a hot climate ; the Suakim-Berber route was open, for the Bedouins of that desert were still loyal and the season was favorable. An expedition sent at this juncture would at least have saved Khartoum and the Eastern Soudan, as well as the lives and the millions wasted later in disastrous failure.

Not only was England's aid refused to the ally whose army she had destroyed and whose government she had disorganized under the guise of friendship, but the Khedive was forbidden to use his own still considerable resources. He realized that unless he sent an army to suppress the Mahdi's rebellion, the vast empire of the Soudan would be lost to Egypt. He directed Genl. Charles P. Stone (formerly U. S. A.), Chief-of-Staff of what had been the Egyptian army, to prepare plans and estimates for a campaign. Although this skilful and experienced officer had never in person visited Upper Egypt or the Soudan, he had studied the reports of the expeditions which he had sent under American officers to explore those regions, as well as those of Sir Samuel Baker and General Gordon. He knew the geography and topography of that country, and understood the peculiar difficulties of warfare in the deserts. He was an excellent organizer and a judicious officer, by no means given to prodigality in public expenditures. After mature consideration, he estimated that a force of twenty-seven thousand regular Egyptian soldiers was necessary to reconquer Kordofan, suppress the rebellion, and reinforce the garrisons so as to insure future tranquillity. When it is remembered that Wolseley took over ten thousand British troops south of the 2d Cataract merely for the purpose of relieving Gordon and returning, without any

intention of suppressing the Mahdi, Genl. Stone's estimate appears very moderate, especially considering the very different value of British compared to Egyptian soldiers.

There were sufficient funds in the Egyptian treasury to fit out the expedition, and the required number of trained soldiers could have been very promptly raised by recalling the lately disbanded regiments to their colors. But just at that time the coupons were due to the foreign bondholders, and moreover, Egypt was to defray the cost of the British army of occupation and to pay \$25,000,000 for the destruction of her own city of Alexandria by the British fleet. It mattered not that the Egyptian debt had been declared by British financiers in an official report to Parliament to be more than double what was justly due. The bondholders' coupons must be paid though all Egypt perish. "Shylock must have his pound of flesh!" Therefore, when the Khedive asked of his British masters permission to send an expedition and submitted Genl. Stone's estimates, he was answered that Egypt could not be permitted to increase her financial burdens, and that the funds in the treasury could not be applied to the recovery of the Soudan.

This opportunity being thrown away, nothing remained but to notify Abd-el-Kader to make the most of the means at his command. We have already seen with what energy he set about fortifying Khartoum and organizing a force from the yet loyal tribes and the Dongolawee and other slave-hunting soldiers now out of employment. The only reinforcements given him were three or four of Arabi's disaffected regiments, sent to the Soudan in December as a punishment for their rebellion, but too late to save El Obeïd. With this accession, he had

in hand an available force of about eight thousand men for active operations. During the spring and summer of 1883 he defeated the Mahdi's forces in four severe conflicts. But his success excited jealousy and intrigues at Cairo. Sir Evelyn Baring, who from a Major of Artillery had become the virtual autocrat of Egypt as Minister Resident, was unfriendly to him as he was afterwards to Gordon. Abdel-Kader was recalled. His successor as governor-general was Allah-ed-Deen, while his little army was put under the command of an ex-major of the Bombay army, until then unknown to fame, who was made a general under the title of Hicks-Pasha. He must have been a man of ability, for in spite of his ignorance of the people, the country, and even the language of the heterogeneous force he commanded, he inflicted three serious defeats upon the Mahdi's lieutenants on the east bank of the Nile, so that Sennaar was almost clear of rebels. The Khedive's ministers now urged the recapture of El Obeïd as necessary to the safety of Khartoum and the eastern Soudan. The British commissioners being consulted, *advised* against it, but they did not *forbid* it, as they had the power to do. Says Prof. Dicey: "There is no doubt that England could if she had chosen have hindered the campaign of Hicks-Pasha. By the fact of her not exercising her right of veto, she became in reality responsible for it." And Sir Samuel Baker wrote at the same time: "Everybody knew that England was the *only* power in Egypt, and that the Khedive could not move his little finger without her special permission; and that as she had completely fettered the Egyptian authorities, she alone was responsible for the situation."



But this was only another instance of the policy of half measures. The intention of the British authorities at Cairo was, if the expedition was successful, to claim credit for having permitted it; if otherwise, for having advised against it; and in any case to shut the mouth of those who pretended that the Khedive did not possess absolute freedom of action. Yet while permitting it, every thing was refused that might insure success. "We absolutely refused," adds Prof. Dicey, "to allow either English or Indian troops to be sent. We also insisted that the native Egyptian army which had been organized under British officers, should not be sent to the Soudan, because as these officers still retained their rank in the British army, their participation in a Soudan campaign might be deemed inconsistent with the theory that our intervention in Egypt was only of a temporary and provisional character. Though we enforced, both by precept and example, the necessity of placing their troops under British officers, we allowed them to enter upon a momentous campaign while refusing the Egyptian government a permission to enlist the services for the Soudan of any officer either on active duty or on half pay." Sir Samuel Baker's arraignment of this shuffling policy is still more severe (see his letter to "The Times," dated Cairo, April 5, 1884).

Hicks-Pasha organized an army of eleven thousand men. On his staff were eleven Englishmen who like himself had severed all connection with the British service, as well as some officers of other European nationalities. Although he had six thousand camels, mules, and horses, so many were needed for supplies, baggage, and ammunition, that he was unable to carry more than

one day's water. From the moment he left the Nile, none was to be found in the deserts of Kordofan, except in the rare and scanty wells of very great depth (from one hundred to two hundred and fifty feet by my own measurement), and therefore very easy to destroy. Major von Seckendorff, an Austrian on Hicks-Pasha's staff, sent the last intelligence ever received from his army in a letter dated Sept. 25th, from Duem, describing the fatiguing twelve days' march along the Nile from Khartoum to that place. He said :

"We hope to be in El Obeïd in five weeks, if we do not die of thirst on the road. . . . The lack of water is terrible ; all the wells on the road are destroyed ; when we march from here we leave the Nile, and other rivers there are none ; and we cannot carry more water than we need for twenty-four hours. . . . The False Prophet will give endless trouble. He musters a great force, and disposes of over fifteen thousand good breech-loaders and fourteen cannons, besides holding two fortified cities, Bara and El Obeïd. The most important thing is that he commands well-mounted cavalry, and fanaticism makes heroes of all his people—a description which certainly does not apply to our troops. If our cavalry gives timely notice of attack from the Arabs, then all will go well ; but if they succeed in taking us by surprise, then we must be prepared for the worst. If they defeat us once, not one of us will return home, for then the entire Soudan will rise as one man. Khartoum and all will be lost. The people will then place unbounded faith in the False Prophet. This shows you that our position is by no means enviable. Yet I have not painted things darker than they are."

This letter was absolutely prophetic of what followed. As the army advanced after leaving the Nile, the Bedouins retired, destroying the wells and closing around its flanks and rear. At Kashgill, two days' march from El Obeïd, a great battle was fought. The Egyptians, already exhausted by heat and thirst, formed in a square, stood their ground with the courage of despair for three days without a drop of water. Of those eleven thousand men none survived except one hundred and fifty, carried off as prisoners to El Obeïd. Hicks-Pasha, his European of-

ficers, and Allah-ed-Deen, the governor-general, fell fighting to the last. Such entire extermination is only what must happen on the desert, for if an army can be cut off from water for three or four days, there is no need to fire another shot. Should any fugitives escape the sword or the lance, they fall exhausted within a few hundred yards, never to rise again. Von Seckendorff's ominous prediction was fulfilled to the letter. Not one man ever returned from that doomed army.

The battle of Kashgill was fought Nov. 1st-3d. Three days later another Egyptian force was destroyed at Tokar on the shores of the Red Sea, eight hundred miles from Kashgill, by the Mahdi's chief lieutenant, Osman-Digma who had stirred up the warlike Bishareens inhabiting the deserts between Berber and Suakim. Col. Moncrieff, the British Consul at Suakim who had volunteered to lead this force, was killed with eleven officers and one hundred and fifty men. One cannon and three hundred rifles fell into Osman-Digma's hands.

I have stated above that the news of these two disasters reaching London a few days after Mr. Gladstone's Guildhall speech announcing a gradual evacuation, put an immediate stop to all idea of reducing the British forces in Egypt.

The consternation in Cairo was immense, and with good reason, for all the troops in the Soudan except the enfeebled garrisons, had perished with Hicks-Pasha. Now, Khartoum, Sennaar, Kassala, Berber and even Suakim were in imminent peril. With them the entire Soudan would be lost, and the rebellion would endanger Egypt herself.

Once more the Khedive and his ministers turned



to their allies and guardians with frantic appeals for protection. The British Ministry's reply was that all the country above the First Cataract must be abandoned ! . . .

Should the reader incline to believe that I am biased in my judgment of events by anti-British prejudices, I beg leave to state that nothing that I could say approaches the severity with which the course of the British government was denounced from the time of Ismaïl's deposition and even before, to the present time, by some of the most talented and prominent men of England, among whom are Prof. Dicey, Sir Samuel Baker, Henry Labouchere, Sir Henry Layard, and a number of others. I am not affected with either *anglo-phobia* or *anglo-mania*. Next after being an American (a good long way after, it is true), I would prefer being an Englishman. My judgment on this subject is formed upon British statements, and my narrative of the campaign is taken mainly from British accounts impartially presented and criticised.

I quote from a letter to the "The Times," dated Cairo, April 5, 1884, from Sir Samuel Baker, the African explorer and Gordon's predecessor as Governor-General of the Soudan, a man whose position and experience give uncommon value to his utterances upon the Soudan question :

"We have so completely abstracted every vestige of power and authority from the unfortunate Khedive, that he cannot even nominate his own officers in any branch of the military or civil services. Having divested the legal ruler of the country of all importance, we add insult to injury by utterly disregarding his personal existence in Egypt. . . . The so-called 'authority' of the Khedive was rudely, if not brutally, negatived by direct orders from Downing Street to abandon the Soudan against the wishes of the ruler, supported by his Ministry, who resigned *en masse* at the presumptuous intrusion of the British *dictum*.

"This act of unwarranted interference, by which an enormous area of the Ottoman Empire was wrested from its legitimate ruler and thrown into the direst anarchy, at once awakened Egypt to the hypocrisy of British declarations. The mask was for the moment cast aside. . . . *Coûte que coûte*, the Soudan was to be abandoned, and proclamations to that effect were issued without delay. The fact of such a proclamation bore an immediate and fatal result ; every tribe that would have remained faithful to the government if prepared to assert its power, was in self-preservation forced to abandon a government that had forsaken the most sacred duty of upholding the rights of those subjects who had declared their loyalty."

When Tewfik-Pasha was notified of the commands of the British Ministry, what manhood still survived in him after so many humiliations was aroused. For the first time he refused to obey, and declared his resolution to abdicate and to throw the responsibility upon England rather than submit to the sacrifice.

But this could never be permitted, for it would destroy the beautiful fictions of England's disinterested occupation of Egypt and non-interference with purely Egyptian concerns, and of the Khedive's supposed independence of action ! A middle course was adopted. Tewfik was quieted by being permitted to call upon his suzerain-lord, the Sultan, for Turkish troops, provided that Turkey bore the expense and would bind herself to withdraw as soon as the Soudan was pacified. But this qualified concession was almost immediately withdrawn ; and when Turkey prepared an expedition, England assumed the preposterous position of recognizing the Sultan's paramount rights over the Soudan, and yet ordering her iron-clads to prevent, by force if necessary, the landing of Turkish troops in the Soudan. (See Sir H. Layard.) To quote from Prof. Dicey (*Nineteenth Century*, March, 1884) :

"Put into plain English, the programme came to this : England refused to send troops to the Soudan herself ; she forbade Egypt to send troops ; she consented to

troops being sent from Turkey only under conditions which rendered their dispatch impossible. In other words, England insisted that Egypt should abandon the Soudan to its fate. Now if this abandonment had been confined to Darfour, Kordofan, and the Equatorial Provinces, which Ismaïl Pasha had added to his dominions, no objection would have been raised. But what Egypt was bidden to do was to give up Khartoum, the centre and head-quarters of her trade with Central Africa, to relinquish the possessions which had belonged to her since the time of Mehemet-Ali, to sacrifice all her garrisons and settlements in the Soudan, and to permit the establishment of a powerful and hostile state in the vicinity of her own defenceless frontier, and in command of the river on which she depends for her existence. She was bidden, too, to do this while our English army was occupying her soil with the avowed object of strengthening the hands of her government, while her own military resources were not yet exhausted, and while the armed assistance of Turkey was at her service upon terms which for her own part she was disposed to accept. Under these circumstances it is hardly to be wondered at if the Khedive and his ministers should have refused this programme."

A question suggests itself here. Why should England object to Turkey's sending troops to a dependency of her own empire, unless it was feared that this re-assertion of her sovereignty over Egypt might produce awkward complications in case that England, at some future day, should want to annex Egypt absolutely, according to her usual and time-honored practice?

Meanwhile the order to evacuate the Soudan had been prematurely announced, and its effect was to add new impetus to the rebellion. All the populations and the Bedouin tribes who had hitherto held a hesitating allegiance, waiting to side with the stronger party, now felt that their only safety lay in joining the Mahdi. If the evacuation had been secretly decided upon and quietly managed, the garrisons might have been safely withdrawn, but its imprudent announcement doomed them to destruction.

Scattered over that immense territory between Berber and Gondokoro, as large as France and Germany together, were 26,000 Egyptian troops and 20,000 non-combatants,



European and Egyptian merchants with their families who could expect no mercy, for the Mahdi had decreed extermination against all Egyptians and foreigners. What was to be their fate?

With that superb contempt for what they call inferior races, characteristic of the British ruling classes, the Ministry replied: "Let the garrisons be speared!"

A perusal of the English papers of that date will prove that I am merely stating the naked facts. Be it remembered to the credit of the British press and people, that a universal cry of indignation arose from them against the inhuman decree of their rulers. Gordon, that noble type of modern Christian chivalry, protested in these words:

"You have 6,000 men in Khartoum. You have garrisons in Darfur, in Bahr-Gazelle, and Gondokoro. Are they to be sacrificed? Their only offence is their loyalty to their sovereign. For their fidelity you are going to abandon them to their fate. You cannot evacuate, because your army cannot be moved. You must either surrender absolutely to the Mahdi or defend Khartoum at all hazards. The latter is the only course which ought to be entertained. . . . But if, in a moment of panic, orders are issued for the abandonment of the whole of the Eastern Soudan, a blow will be struck against the security of Egypt, which may have fatal consequences." \*

Public sentiment had quickly become too strong to be disregarded; yet the government still refused to send troops. Again a middle course was adopted. Since Gordon was so bitterly opposed to abandoning the garrisons, let *him* undertake their rescue. His name and influence might relieve the difficulty. On the 18th of January, 1884, he was requested by the ministers to assume the task, and he left London that same afternoon.

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\* Gordon's words, "your army, your garrisons," when speaking to the British Ministry of the Egyptian troops, prove with what scorn he flung aside the hypocritical disclaimer of responsibility and solidarity with regard to the events in the Soudan.

His mission was proclaimed to be one of peace, and he was expressly ordered to abstain from all aggressive measures.

Stopping but one day in Cairo to confer with the authorities there, he crossed the Korosko desert accompanied only by his faithful comrade, Col. O. H. Stewart, a few loyal Bishareen sheikhs who guaranteed his safe transit, and a son of Zobeir-Pasha who, no doubt, was sent by his treacherous father as a spy. Gordon had declared that if he could not have an army he would go alone, and the only material aid given him was £100,000 in gold. The prestige of his name was expected to supply all deficiencies. He reached Khartoum in exactly one month (Feb. 18th). On his arrival he was received with fulsome protestations of loyalty by the principal sheikhs and all the demonstrations so dearly loved by the people of those regions. But he found the situation very different from what he had left it four years before. His disinterestedness, justice, and liberality had won him great personal influence and respect; for a governor-general who refused to fill his pockets was a miracle in the Soudan, and probably his sanity was somewhat doubted in consequence. But most of the good he had accomplished had been undone by his successors, and what was chiefly remembered now was his energetic suppression of the Central African slave-hunting. This was a grievance not to be forgiven by the slave-trade interest which comprised nearly the entire population of Khartoum. Their opposition was too powerful to be overcome, and it would render his mission impossible. This consideration compelled him to issue a proclamation reducing taxes, abolishing all monopolies, and removing restrictions upon slave-

buying and selling, if not upon slave-hunting. The registers and records of indebtedness to the government, the kourbashesh and other instruments of punishment, were burned in front of the governor's palace. At the same time he sent the Mahdi a robe of state, and invested him with the rank of Emir or Sultan of Kordofan, both of which honors the Mahdi rejected with a defiant message, saying that his mission was from God and he wanted no dignities from infidels. This act of Gordon was an error, for it was construed as a confession of weakness, and it seemed absurd to offer the Mahdi the gift of a province whose possession was already his own by the conquest of his victorious arms.

The condition of affairs is so well described by Sir Samuel Baker that I quote his own words:

"A few weeks' reflection brought the natural reaction. The discontented saw their opportunity—Gordon had no army to support his moral power. Morality is held in slight respect in the Soudan unless backed up by military material. With all the best intentions, Gordon found his overtures rejected. His proclamations were ignored, and the announcement of abandonment was corroborated by the dispatch of the sick and incapables towards Cairo, together with many of the civil employés. It became impossible for the wavering tribes to continue loyal. Had Gordon been supported by a military force sent up from Cairo, he might have postponed the movement of evacuation, but when once assured of the reality of that fatal act, even the loyal tribes threw in their lot with the general cause of insurrection.

"In the meantime the Egyptian garrisons upon the Red Sea coasts were threatened by the gathering forces of the rebels, headed by one Osman Digma, a slave-trader of evil repute in the Soudan, who had become an emissary of the Mahdi. The Egyptian forces were severely defeated, the British Consul Moncrieff was killed, and the garrisons of Tokar and Sinkat were invested by the victorious Arabs. Suakin was threatened, and it became absolutely necessary to equip a powerful force from Cairo for the relief of the beleaguered garrisons.

"It was then that the ridiculous absurdity of British interference was exemplified. At the battle of Tel-el-Kebir we had destroyed the Egyptian army, and we had set up in its stead a model army of 6,000 men, under the command of General Baker Pasha, who was summoned from Constantinople by the Khedive of Egypt, with the sanction of the British Government, to reorganize and to command the Egypt-

tian forces. He had quickly resolved order out of chaos, and had gained the confidence and approval of the Khedive and all Egyptian authorities, when he was suddenly superseded by a British officer who was forced upon the Khedive (Sir Evelyn Wood), and the British Government, which pretended to restore the authority of the Khedive, dealt the first blow and crushed that authority by superseding the officer whom he had himself selected, and thrusting upon his acceptance an officer upon the active list. Thus the Khedive's army was taken completely out of his hands by way of proving our sincerity in restoring his authority.

"At the same time Baker Pasha organized the gendarmerie, which in military appearance rivalled the regular army. This civil army was too military for the taste of British officials, and an order was issued (not by the Khedive) by the English authorities that the military element must be eliminated, and the gendarmerie must consider itself a distinctly civil force: it must therefore drop the martial appellation and be termed 'constabulary.' It was not to be considered as a fighting force. Events pressed forward. The littoral of the Red Sea was in a blaze, and troops were instantly required. It will be deemed incredible, but at the first moment of actual necessity there were positively no available troops in Egypt. The regular army of Sir Evelyn Wood had been recruited on the agreement that they were not to be employed beyond the frontier of Lower Egypt; therefore they could not be called upon to serve in the Soudan. It was also determined that no British officers upon the active list should be permitted to engage in hostilities in that distant province, which had been declared to be beyond the sphere of British intervention. Here was a muddle. There was an army that was not allowed to fight, and this was the standing army of the Khedive, under Sir Evelyn Wood and a host of British officers. The gendarmerie of Baker Pasha had been reduced to constabulary, and were expressly told 'that they were only a civil force to be employed simply in Lower Egypt.' Thus, with all the expense of a most perfect military organization, there was not a single battalion to be found in a moment of grave emergency. This was the efficiency which resulted from a British administration. At the same time the garrisons of Sinkat and Tokar were surrounded by the enemy, and the brave defenders of the former were starving."

Sinkat, the only town between the Red Sea and Berber, was a summer-resort where the merchants and officials of Suakim repaired during the hot season. It was a small place, about forty miles west of Suakim, and it had been fortified and garrisoned since the troubles began, because its position in the mountains commanded the Suakim-Berber trail. For weeks it had been besieged by Osman-Digma's forces, and vain attempts had been made to relieve it. Tokar, another fortified position fifty miles south of Suakim and near the seashore, was also



besieged, and it was known in Cairo that unless relief was sent at once both those places must fall. Baker-Pasha was the only man available, but there were no troops. Zobeir-Pasha was employed to raise a force. The streets of Cairo and all the towns in Egypt were searched for blacks, and men were dragged off in chains to fill Zobeir's ranks; but at the last moment he was deprived of his command, and the bewildered blacks were forced into the railway train for Suez by cavalry with drawn sabres. These men, together with one thousand five hundred of the reluctant "constabulary police" drafted in spite of pledges to the contrary, and about one thousand Turkish Bashi-bazouks (Egyptian service), composed the unpromising materials out of which Valentine Baker was ordered to form an army for the relief of Sinkat and Tokar. Not only were they known to be averse to fighting, but most of them were suspected of sympathy with the Mahdi's cause. However, General Baker with this force, joined by five hundred more men dragged from different parts of Egypt, attempted to carry out his indefinite plans of campaign. He left Cairo on December 17th for Suakim which he proposed to make the base of his operations. He was given supreme military and civil command, with the power of life and death.

Probably no general ever proceeded on an expedition with an army less trustworthy and plans less definite than those of Baker-Pasha. For this he is not to be blamed. In consenting to assume the chief command he acted solely from a sense of duty, and for six weeks he labored incessantly to drill, discipline, and fashion into the semblance of an army the heterogeneous elements composing

his command. His original purpose had been to move first to the relief of Sinkat.

“The first march was to have been made to the foot of the hills seventeen miles away; on the second the forces would enter the hills by a pass three miles long, ending in a narrow gorge at the place where two hundred Egyptian troops had been killed. The latter point was to be temporarily fortified and garrisoned by two hundred men and two guns. The troops would after this get on open ground, and arrive at Sinkat by a long march of twenty-two miles. They would rest one day and on the next take off all the women and children from the town and return by four marches to Suakim, evacuating on their way the fort at the head of the pass, because there is no water there and consequently the post could not be held permanently. But Tokar was thrice attacked by the rebels before this plan could be carried out, and General Baker was directed to relieve that place at all hazards. This determination abandoned Sinkat to its fate. For a fortnight the garrison had been eating roots and tree leaves. It was an enfeebled band indeed which sortied to die amid the rebel hordes. Tewfik-Bey had harangued his men, saying that by fighting they might save themselves, but that by remaining they must die from hunger in a few days; flight was impossible. The men thus animated with Tewfik-Bey's spirit, destroyed the military stores, exploded the magazine, filled their pouches to the utmost with cartridges, and issued forth, six hundred strong, against the rebels.

“Osman Digma's hordes rushed to the attack. Tewfik-Bey and his men fought nobly. For a long time they repulsed every attempt to break their ranks. Finally superior numbers prevailed, and with a tremendous rush the rebels burst through one of the sides of the Egyptian square. A general massacre ensued, and not a soul escaped. According to the latest reports only four sick men, who were unable to take part in the sortie, the Cadi of Sinkat, and thirty women were spared by the rebels.”

This disaster occurred on the 11th of February, 1884.

On the 2d, Baker had sailed from Suakim and landed at Trinkitat, about fifty miles south. Thence to Tokar, the distance is only twelve to fifteen miles. This town, already noted for the defeat and death of Consul Moncrieff in Nov. 1883, was a small fortified post on a diminutive fresh-water creek which falls into the sea at Trinkitat. Baker began his advance from his intrenchments at that place on Sunday, Feb. 3d, with nearly 4,000 men, four Krupps and two Gatling guns. He had sent from Suakim to Cairo an urgent request for rifles to

replace the old muskets with which numbers of his troops were armed. In reply he received orders to try to force his way to Tokar without delay, and with the English officers connected with the expedition he began the march, expecting defeat. The spies had falsely reported that the roads were clear with the exception of small bands of rebels. On Monday forenoon a portion of the advance was attacked on the march, and the fight was begun by a few Arab horsemen charging upon Baker-Pasha's cavalry which fled. Baker then formed a square which the enemy surrounded. The Bashi-bazouks then fled in confusion, and the gunners deserted their guns. Baker-Pasha was several times surrounded by the enemy, but, with his staff, managed to cut his way through. All the camels, baggage, and artillery were lost in the battle. Most of the Egyptian officers and men bolted. Col. Sartorius tried hard to rally them, but without success. The Europeans behaved splendidly. Col. Sartorius narrowly escaped with his life. The enemy pursued almost into Trinkitat. The Europeans, police, and Turkish infantry were cut to pieces. Twenty-five hundred men were killed, including fourteen European officers. No mention is made of the wounded, for none survived except those who were able to retreat with the routed army. Baker, with the remnant of his force, succeeded in reaching Trinkitat, where they re-embarked on the British gunboats and returned to Suakim. This event took place just at the very time that Gordon was speeding on his way to Khartoum across the Korosko desert. The news met him at Berber, from which place he telegraphed that in spite of Baker's defeat he was still confident of success,

Meanwhile Osman-Digma, reinforced by the conquerors of Sinkat, continued the siege of Tokar, which he captured on the 21st. He then blockaded Suakim completely on the land side and harassed its garrison by nightly attacks. His double success had gained him the accession of the Bedouin tribes occupying the country between Suakim and Berber, who until then had been undecided which side to take. The capture of 4,500 rifles and ten guns (including those taken in Tokar), with abundance of ammunition, helped him materially in his subsequent battles against Gen. Graham.

In the meantime Gordon had reached Khartoum and, as we have seen, had found the situation far different from what he had expected. His efforts were now concentrated upon strengthening the defences of Khartoum, avowing his purpose of retaining its permanent possession. • By this means he hoped to secure the safe retreat of the garrisons in the far south. He was willing to abandon the country west of the White Nile and south of Khartoum, but he was firmly convinced of the absolute necessity of retaining possession of the Eastern Soudan. His views, as expressed before he left London, were so judicious and so forcibly expressed that I quote them here :

“On ‘Chinese’ Gordon’s arrival in England he was interviewed by a correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette* on the situation in the Soudan. The following is a transcript of Colonel Gordon’s remarks :

“So you would abandon the Soudan ? But the Eastern Soudan is indispensable to Egypt. It will cost you far more to retain your hold upon Egypt proper if you abandon your hold of the Eastern Soudan to the Mahdi or to the Turk, than what it would to retain your hold upon the Eastern Soudan by the aid of such material as exists in the provinces. Darfur and Kordofan must be abandoned. That I admit ; but the provinces lying to the east of the White Nile should be retained, and north of Sennaar. The danger to be feared is not that the Mahdi will march northward through Wadi Halfa ; on the contrary, it is very improbable that he will



ever go so far north. The danger is altogether of a different nature. It arises from the influence which the spectacle of a conquering Mohammedan power, established close to your frontiers, will exercise upon the population which you govern. In all the cities of Egypt it will be felt that what the Mahdi has done, they may do ; and, as he has driven out the intruder and the infidel, they may do the same. Nor is it only England that has to face this danger. The success of the Mahdi has already excited dangerous fermentation in Arabia and Syria. Placards have been posted in Damascus calling upon the population to rise and drive out the Turks. If the whole of the Eastern Soudan is surrendered to the Mahdi the Arab tribes on both sides of the Red Sea will take fire."

As to the provinces to be abandoned, Gordon's plan was to turn them over to the descendants of their ancient sultans. But this idea was altogether impracticable. In three generations those families had sunk into obscurity, and the new rulers would be slave-hunting chiefs like Zobehr-Pasha, Osman-Digma, and Abou-Saoud. Or else, the Mahdi, who announced his mission to be the extermination of all Turks and foreigners and the conquest of the country down to the sea, would establish an empire so strong and aggressive as to be a permanent and formidable menace to Egypt.

Up to this time nothing had been done to nullify the repeated declaration that no British troops would be sent to the Soudan. But Gordon had been in Khartoum *just one day* when 5,000 British soldiers, under the command of General Sir Gerald Graham, sailed from Suez for Suakim on the 19th of February, 1884, and attacked the Mahdi's lieutenant, Osman-Digma, at the very moment when Gordon, in pursuance of his instructions, proclaimed his mission to be one of conciliation, and offered the Mahdi peace and recognition !

Why this contradictory course of action ? If England had no interests in the Soudan, why was Graham sent there ? Not to relieve Sinkat or Tokar ; it was too late

for that. Not to defend Suakim, for one battalion and two gunboats were amply sufficient, and Admiral Hewett was at that time commander of that post, with 500 marines and several war-ships. Then what for? To avenge the death of Moncrieff and Hicks-Pasha in November and Baker's recent defeat? But these were purely Egyptian disasters in which England had disclaimed all responsibility or concern. Moncrieff had left his legitimate consular duties to volunteer with an Egyptian expedition, and Baker was no longer a British, but an Egyptian officer, as were Hicks and his comrades, and certainly England's honor was in no way affected by their disasters. Why then attempt to avenge them by waging war on the Red Sea while proclaiming peace on the White Nile? This action of the British government can be attributed only to the incredible vacillation which seemed to pervade all their Egyptian policy, or else to a spirit of "Jingoism" which assumed that England's honor demanded that she should avenge Egyptian disasters merely because Englishmen had been in command, while yet refusing to admit that this national honor was most deeply involved in shielding from harm an ally whom she had tied hand and foot under the guise of protection. The double-dealing course now adopted was certain to defeat the avowed object of Gordon's peaceful mission, and to expose his life to the most imminent peril.

Accordingly, immediately after Graham's invasion, we find Gordon attacked at Khartoum and asking most urgently that British, Indian, or Turkish troops be sent to his support.

I will here present an outline of Graham's campaign, which, from the nature of the case, is necessarily drawn

from British official reports and the accounts of English war-press correspondents.\*

On the 28th of February, 1884, General Graham landed at Trinkitat with 4,000 effective men, and on the 29th he attacked Osman-Digma's position at Teb, about eight miles from the sea. The British were formed in one square with cavalry covering the front and guns at the angles. They advanced with a degree of caution far greater than would have been displayed before a civilized foe, and the desperate fighting of the Arabs showed that this caution was well timed. The weak intrenchments, armed with the captured guns, were not carried until after four hours of stubborn conflict. Osman-Digma's forces were estimated at about 10,000 men, of whom not more than one fifth were armed with Remington rifles. The rest were supplied with scimetars and spears. But neither the rifles nor the guns under the Arabs' manipulation caused any great loss among the British. The wounds were chiefly received at close quarters during the fanatical charges or rushes upon the troops.

"The rebels were in no military order, but were scattered here and there, so as to take advantage of the abundant cover which the ground afforded. They clung to their position with desperate tenacity. There were 2,000 rebels directly in front, while many hundreds hung around the two sides of the square.

"As the British moved forward, firing as they advanced, the rebels, armed with spears and huge cross-hilted swords, rose within two hundred yards of the advancing lines and rushed against the British at breakneck speed, heedless and fearless of death. They fell right and left, though some of the brave fellows reached within five paces of the square. None of them bolted; they only fell back sullenly when they were forced. The British pursued them as far as the wells of Teb, where the

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\* It is a matter of regret for the sake of historical accuracy that there are no other sources of information. It would be curious and interesting to have the Arab accounts and *their* estimates of the British numbers and losses. Unfortunately neither the Mahdi nor Osman-Digma wrote any reports or had any war-correspondents with them.

rebels made their last stand. Sheiks who advanced empty-handed, to show that they bore charmed lives, were stricken down with bayonet thrusts.

"The Highlanders carried the next earthwork, capturing three guns. At the end of four hours of arduous fighting the British gained possession of the rebel camps, of the huts, and the wells.

"The cavalry on the right flank charged the retreating rebels, who did not bolt, but struck the troopers who rode among them, giving blow for blow. A splendid display of heroism was made by three mounted rebels. They resolutely maintained their ground against the shock of two cavalry regiments before being cut down. They continued to fight after the third charge, killing several soldiers and wounding Colonel Barrow with their spears. The enemy retired very slowly, and in consequence of this the British kept up their firing for a long time after the fortunes of the day had been decided.

"All advices concur in acknowledging that the Arabs fought with desperate bravery. Osman Digma brought 12,000 men into the field. The most of these took part in the charge against the British lines. During the entire battle the Arabs' want of organization and regular discipline constantly exposed them to the deadly effect of the continuous fire which the British poured upon them hour after hour."

The British loss was stated at 24 killed and 147 wounded, and the Arab loss at 2,000. These figures describe more eloquently than words the reckless bravery of these sons of the desert, charging with naked breasts and only sword and spear upon the serried ranks of a British square pouring into them the murderous fire of breech-loaders and machine-guns.

On the day following the battle of Teb, Gen. Graham entered the ruins of Tokar and recovered the guns lost by Baker-Pasha one month before; after which he re-embarked his troops and returned to Suakim to operate against Osman-Digma, who had rallied his forces near that place.

Suakim derives its importance from being the best seaport on the Red Sea, and the terminus of the great caravan route which leaves the Nile at Berber and brings to the sea-board the trade of the Soudan. Its population is about 5,000. The government buildings and the best



portion of the town are built of white coral rock upon a coral island, separated by a channel 200 yards in width from the mainland on which are the suburbs, bazars, etc. A narrow causeway serves as communication between the town and the mainland. The only supply of water is brought on donkeys and camels from very indifferent wells some two miles distant; but since the British established a garrison they have been supplied with condensed water from their steamers. A line of earthworks has also been erected to cover the wells. The island-town, if defended by a gun-boat on each side of the causeway, is perfectly impregnable to any attack that the Bedouins could make against it, but the suburbs had been continually harassed by Osman-Digma since August, 1883. He had now concentrated his forces at Tamaï wells, only eleven miles from Suakim.

On the 12th of March Gen. Graham advanced to attack him. The difficulty of securing a sufficient provision of water for even that short distance rendered his movements very slow. He bivouacked that evening within two miles of the enemy who kept up a desultory fire during the night. The British left their bivouacs at 8 o'clock, marching in two squares of one brigade each, about 900 yards apart. This is a summary of the British accounts of the battle.

"They moved in echelon, the Second brigade leading. This brigade was composed of the Forty-second, Sixty-fifth, Royal Marines, and Naval Brigade, with Gardners and Gatlings. The First brigade comprised the Eighty-ninth, Gordon Highlanders, Sixtieth Rifles, with Royal Artillery nine and seven-pounder batteries, and Royal Marines. As the Second brigade moved off to the left or southerly direction, led by General Davis, it was joined by General Graham and his staff. We could plainly see the enemy ranged all along the hills on our front and right. Their black skins stood out boldly against the glare of day. Some were within twelve hundred yards.

"Meanwhile the cavalry, which had taken up a position on our left rear, sent

forward two squadrons, together with the Abyssinians, to skirmish. These were quickly engaged, and a hot fire was soon raging. The enemy coming on, the skirmishers fell back, and the Second brigade advanced seven hundred yards, firing as they went. The troops had opened out nearly into line, their rear to a great extent being covered by the First brigade, which was half a mile away on our right. As we gained the edge of the nulla the fire became very hot from our side, the enemy mostly contenting themselves by attempting to rush at us with their spears and swords. Our men could not easily be got, despite trumpet calls and officers' shouts, to reserve their fire and aim carefully. In a few minutes our line was obscured by dense smoke from our own rifles, and under cover of this the enemy crept up the sides of the nulla, and a succession of rushes by our brave and resolute foes was made at the troops. The Sixty-fifth, who were on our right, marines on their left, and Forty-second on extreme left, were nearest to the brink of the nulla, which, on their front, made a bend inward toward them. The enemy appear to have gathered there one thousand strong. Creeping up under cover of the smoke and sloping ground, they dashed at the marines and Sixty-fifth. A hundred swarthy Arabs came bounding over the rocks up the plain, spear and sword in hand. Half were instantly shot down, but thirty or forty were able to throw themselves upon our bayonets, giving and receiving fearful wounds.

"Quick as lightning the rush increased, and in less time than it takes to tell the Sixty-fifth gave way, falling back upon the marines. The bulk of the regiment crowded in upon the marines, throwing them in disorder, and back everybody was borne in a confused mass, men and regiments being inextricably mixed up. General Graham and his staff tried their best to hold and rally the men, and General Davis and all the officers labored to get the troops to stand their ground in an orderly way. A large force of rebels charged down upon the Second brigade like men inflamed with desperate ferocity, shouting and yelling and utterly heedless of death, and succeeded in capturing all the Gatlings and Gardners belonging to the brigade, which was driven back eight hundred yards.

"By this time the fire from the First brigade on our right as well as front, and the cavalry on our left, held the Arabs, and the officers succeeded in checking the retreat; the Black Watch, who were fairly in hand, and a portion of the marines largely assisting in stopping what might have been a much more serious disaster. The brigade was reformed, and the men who had got out of their regiments were sent into their own lines again. I must revert to the way in which several hundreds of marines and Highlanders fought back to back, firing and retiring in excellent order. They were over two hundred yards to the brigade front when it was halted and reformed, and to their great coolness and steadiness is largely due the final success of the day.

"The troops being rallied, Gen. Graham immediately ordered a bayonet-charge, the gallant troops went for the enemy, and a fearful hand-to-hand fight ensued for the possession of the guns, which the British finally succeeded in recapturing. Following up their advantage, they continued to press the rebels, who would not run, but continued to retire slowly, striking blow for blow, until they were driven beyond their camp, when Gen. Graham ordered a halt, quickly followed by a for-

ward movement. As the British advanced, men sprang up sometimes within two hundred yards of them, armed with spears and brandishing a huge shield. These would charge down upon the British ranks without hesitation, at breakneck speed, until the latter's bullets laid them low. The British stormed up the works where the rebels were in force. The gallant blacks, with no thought of flight or surrender, held out their spears and shields against bullets and bayonets until the trenches all around were like one grave.

"The next objective point was the second intervening ridge, eight hundred yards off. The red granite boulders and rocks were rugged and sharp and hot, and the march was a most trying one. With a cheer the men took the first ridge, firing, as they went along, occasional shots at the enemy's main body, whom we could see gathered on our right on the second ridge. The Arab's fire in reply to ours was feeble and wild, and they soon began trotting off towards the mountains as we advanced. Gen. Graham, with a portion of his staff, directed the advance, and, with a ringing cheer, we carried the second ridge, the defence of which was insignificant. Gaining the top, we saw in the valley Tamaï, one hundred and eighty feet below, the tents and huts composing the camp of Osman Digma. There were very few Arabs about, and of these the troops soon made short work. The Arabs retired before the English slowly and sullenly. They were defeated, but not put to rout. They walked away as if sauntering through a bazaar, with arms folded or swinging at their sides. They were often shot down, but this did not hasten their companions' speed. It was impossible to take prisoners. The wounded Arabs would lie motionless, without uttering a single cry or moan, and watch their chance to stab the advancing British with knife or spear. The victors walked among the wounded as among so many vipers. A wounded Arab killed a British marine during the night. Another attempted to stab Colonel Herbert Stewart while his aide-de-camp was giving the wounded man water.

"The rebels entered the second square upon their hands and knees, beneath the muzzles of the Gatling guns. They then commenced slashing with their weapons, doing terrible execution. The British were no match for the rebels at close quarters."

After four hours' fighting the Bedouins sullenly retired from the field and the battle of Tamaï was won.

The British loss was one hundred killed and one hundred and fifty wounded. The Arab loss was estimated at over two thousand.

After the battle, Osman's camp was burnt, and the British returned to Suakim the next day. They were victorious, but it had been a very narrow escape; for, if the First Brigade had been broken like the Second, none

but the mounted men could ever have cut their way back to Suakim.

This retreat, after a victory, illustrates the peculiar difficulties of warfare in the Soudan. It was impossible to pursue the Arabs among the foot-hills, where the British could not retain their formation in squares, and where the enemy could lie in ambush in every ravine. In fact, if the Arabs had avoided battle on the plain from the first, and had drawn the British into the hills, the result might have been very different. But the insuperable difficulty was the want of water. Not one drop could be found in the hills or on that arid plain scorched by tropical heat, so that the retreat was inevitable. It will be seen further on how the Bedouins manage to supply themselves with water where Europeans would perish for want of it.

The expectation entertained that the Arabs would be discouraged by their heavy losses at Teb and Tamaï was quickly dispelled. Osman-Digma reoccupied his former position as soon as the British retired, and harassed them in their lines around Suakim by nightly alerts. General Graham, hoping to crush him by a final defeat, made a second advance. His purpose was to attack Osman's position at the wells of Tamanieb, a short distance beyond Tamaï. Several days were consumed in establishing a water depot half-way, and the difficulty of the undertaking may be imagined when it is known that every drop had to be brought in goat-skins on camel-back from the condensing steamers in the harbor or the brackish wells outside of the town. On the 24th of March the troops moved out from their camp, and before they had advanced eight miles, one fourth of the soldier gave out



entirely, and were left behind, and another fourth dropped to the rear exhausted, following as best they could after being relieved of their guns and cartridge-belts which were packed on camels. On that plain the thermometer rises to 120° or 130° in the sun in March every day, (150° or 160° in July and August), and this terrible heat which Europeans cannot withstand, is just enough to make the Bedouins feel comfortable. This and the absolute lack of water are some of the points completely overlooked by those who find it so easy to plan and criticise campaigns from the "Horse-Guards" in London or the Head-quarters at Cairo. It is certain that if Osman-Digma had known to what helpless condition the fearful heat had reduced the British column on that march, he would have attacked it then and there, and a massacre like that of Hicks-Pasha would have occurred. But unconscious of this circumstance, and warned by his experiences at Teb Tamaï, he had resolved to avoid another encounter with the British on the plain, and to draw them into the hills. Accordingly, his forces slowly retired, skirmishing from a distance, inflicting no loss and suffering but little. On the 26th, starting very early from their water-depot, the British reached the wells of Tamanieb, where the men and horses slaked their thirst. This slight skirmish was magnified into a battle, and the English papers announced in big capitals the capture and destruction of the "*town* of Tamanieb," when, in fact, this was the name of the wells; for no town was ever built on the desert. What was burnt was Osman's camp of brush huts, such as he would leave behind him at every change of position. The most valuable object captured at Tamanieb, as stated by the English papers,

was Osman-Digma's frying-pan, which had the honor of being sent to England as a trophy. On the following day, General Graham returned to Suakim with all his forces, and on the 1st of April he re-embarked, leaving only a battalion of marines and some war-vessels to hold the place, and declaring the campaign to be at an end.

Yes, it *was* at an end; but not because its object had been accomplished, or because Osman-Digma was conquered, but because it was evidently impossible to continue it. General Graham was too skilful a soldier not to know that his troops could not follow the enemy under a torrid sun and through waterless deserts and mountains, and that if they remained at Suakim during the summer, the climate would destroy them. But the departure of the British was inevitably construed as a triumph for the Mahdi's cause. All the wavering tribes joined his standard, and from that time forward Suakim was closely blockaded, if not besieged, from the land-side.

Meanwhile the news of Graham's invasion had reached Khartoum and neutralized all the effect of Gordon's peaceful protestations. Before the middle of March he was attacked at Khartoum, and then began that wondrous defence, whose details will probably never be fully known, since its hero has perished. Never was there a brighter illustration of the power of a strong will and an upright and noble mind. One man alone, forsaken by his government, without help, an utter stranger in ideas, language, customs, and religion, was enabled by the mere force of his character to mould into a fighting army a heterogeneous crowd of Egyptians, Soudanese, and negro savages, and to hold them in hand for ten months, under hardships and privations, in spite of their natural and

religious sympathies all favorable to the Mahdi's cause. The same wonderful fascination over barbarians that had enabled him to conquer the Tae-Ping rebellion in China was exhibited here in Khartoum.

It was not long, however, before he became satisfied of the impossibility of rescuing the garrisons, or even holding Khartoum more than a few months without aid, and he made repeated and urgent requests to his government to send him British, or Indian, or Turkish troops, or, as a last resort, to send Zobeir-Pasha, he being the only man, in Gordon's judgment, possessing sufficient influence and force of character to organize a government and prevent utter anarchy after his own retirement. Perhaps Zobeir did possess the ability, but he was a double-dyed traitor, and at that very time was in secret communication with the Mahdi.\* If he had been sent to Khartoum he would undoubtedly have betrayed Gordon to his death in revenge for his son Suliman's execution. For once the Ministry acted wisely in declining to send him. But why did they still refuse to send troops when it became evident that without military support Gordon's mission must fail and he must become the victim of his own heroism? The following extracts show in what light Gordon viewed the action of his government:

"LONDON, May 5, 1884.—Parliamentary documents give a dispatch to Sir Evelyn Baring from General Gordon, dated Khartoum, April 16th, in which he says: 'As far as I understand the situation you say there is no intention of sending relief here or to Berber. You refuse me Zobeir-Pasha. I consider myself free to act according to circumstances. I shall hold on here as long as I can. If I can suppress the rebellion I shall do so, otherwise I shall retire to the equator and leave you the indelible disgrace of abandoning the garrisons of Senngaar, Kassala,

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\* This fact having been discovered after the fall of Khartoum, he was imprisoned at Gibraltar and afterwards banished to the Island of Cyprus and deprived of his honors and emoluments.

Berber, and Dongola, with the certainty that you will eventually be forced to smash up the Mahdi under great difficulties if you would retain peace in Egypt.'

"The documents include a telegram from Colonel O. H. Stewart to Sir Evelyn Baring, in which he says: 'General Gordon has acquainted me with your intention not to relieve Khartoum. It is proposed that I shall go to Berber, trusting to the success of your negotiations for the opening of the Suakim and Berber route. Doubting, however, success, so far as the Berber road is concerned, unless it is opened by advancing troops, I am inclined to think my retreat safer by way of the equator, and shall, therefore, follow General Gordon's fortunes.'"

Still the Ministry seemed unable to decide upon any course, and Gordon's appeals remained unheeded. Some of them were deeply pathetic. In one of a later date he says:

"How many times have we written asking for reinforcements, and calling your serious attention to the Soudan, and no answer came? Men's hearts become weary of delay. While you are eating, and drinking, and resting in good beds, we and those with us, soldiers and servants, are watching night and day, trying to quell the movement of the Mahdi."

It certainly seems that a strange indifference to Gordon's fate was exhibited at that time by the government. It was officially stated in the House of Commons that he had no orders to remain in Khartoum if he found his mission impracticable, and that he was perfectly free to return when he thought proper; a declaration which seems like bitter mockery in view of his perilous situation; for at that very time a number of non-combatants that he had attempted to send to Lower Egypt for safety were massacred at Shendy with their escort of 500 soldiers. After Graham commenced hostilities at Suakim in March, there was no time when Gordon could have escaped northward beyond Berber, for his steamers could navigate no farther, and the insurgent tribes held all the country below. A reference to the debates in Parliament on this question shows the position taken by the Ministry:



"On the 12th of May the Right Hon. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Conservative member for East Gloucestershire, moved in the House of Commons his motion of May 2d, that the House regrets that the course of the government has not tended to promote the success of Gen. Gordon's mission, and that steps to secure his personal safety have been delayed. The honorable gentleman, in making the motion, said he did not mean to question the wisdom of the government's policy in demanding the evacuation of the Soudan by Egypt. What he called in question was the present conduct of the government toward that country. He called in review the circumstances which led to the departure of Gen. Gordon to the Soudan. 'The object of his going,' Sir Michael said, 'was to bring about the peaceful evacuation of the country. A more heroic offer than that made by Gen. Gordon was never made by living man. Yet when he arrived at Khartoum the government, instead of seconding his proposals, negatived them. With strange inconsistency the government insisted upon a pacific policy in one part of the Soudan and went to war in another part, thereby destroying any chance which Gen. Gordon might have had for carrying out his mission. The government was worthy of blame for not having sent assistance from Suakim. They have practically deserted the brave soldier, the Christian hero, in his hour of peril. This is the general feeling of the entire country. England now demands that Gen. Gordon and those who trusted him shall be rescued.'

"Mr. Gladstone, on rising to speak in defence of the government's course, was greeted with hearty and long-continued applause. He congratulated Sir Michael Hicks-Beach on his forcible speech, but strenuously denied that the government had deserted Gen. Gordon. Continuing, the Prime-Minister denied that the government had failed to do one single act that was for the safety and success of Gen. Gordon. 'The charges which the honorable gentleman has just preferred against the government are absurd. They can only be accounted for by his lack of knowledge of the true facts.' Mr. Gladstone thereupon referred to official dispatches to prove Gen. Gordon's security, and to justify the action which the government had taken. He contended that the charges failed to note the fact that Gen. Gordon had orders to resort to military force if peaceful measures should not prove successful. 'The demand of the honorable gentleman,' he insisted, 'amounted to a war of conquest against a people struggling to be free. The war which the Mahdi is waging is a war for freedom. Is it that which the honorable gentleman wishes England to put down?'"

It is fortunate for Mr. Gladstone that his fame does not rest upon the course of his Cabinet in the Soudan question. To err is human, and great as he undoubtedly is as a statesman, it cannot be denied that he erred grievously in this matter, probably led into mistakes by the representations of military men on whose judgment of

professional subjects he naturally thought he could safely rely. He must have been himself deceived as to "the true facts" when he spoke of "Gen. Gordon's security"; and his statement that "Gordon had orders to resort to military force if peaceful measures should not prove successful" seems absolutely absurd in view of the fact that he had been sent without a single soldier, that all the force available for active operations had been destroyed with Hicks-Pasha, and that Gordon had no force whatever except the garrison of Khartoum, already insufficient for its defence, as well as unreliable and wavering in its loyalty. Furthermore, if, as Mr. Gladstone said, "the Mahdi was waging a war for freedom," which England should not put down, what was his lieutenant, Osman-Digma, fighting for that he should be crushed? If the Mahdi's forces ought not to be opposed on the White Nile, why should Graham have been sent to slaughter them on the Red Sea?

By this time public sentiment had become too powerful and excited to be satisfied by such subterfuges, and it compelled the Ministry to organize an expedition for Gordon's relief. Its purpose was emphatically declared to be, "*Rescue and retire.*"

This tardy determination having been reached, the first step was evidently the selection of the best line of operations, and this selection must be the result of a thorough study of the country, all the more necessary because war in the Soudan has to be carried on under circumstances so essentially different from those prevailing in other lands, and which are these:

I. Outside of the very narrow valley of the Nile the country furnishes *absolutely nothing* for the support of

an army, which must therefore carry all its supplies, including even forage for its animals.

II. There are no roads and no vehicles in the Soudan—only camel-trails, and every thing must be transported on camel-back.

III. And most important of all, the Soudan is a rainless, waterless land. Away from the Nile there are no rivulets, creeks, or springs—nothing but rare and scanty wells at long intervals, or rocky reservoirs in deep ravines, like those of Gakdul and Abou-Klea, where the rain-water collects during the brief rainy season. Droughts of two and three years' duration are not uncommon, and had just occurred when I travelled over the deserts on both sides of the Nile in 1873, '74, and '75. In such seasons great numbers of cattle, and even camels, perish. No animals are used for transportation except camels, for they alone can travel five days without water, even in summer, and on the caravan routes wells are often that far apart. Consequently water sufficient to supply men (and cavalry and artillery horses in the case of an army) has to be carried in goat-skins which waste a large proportion by evaporation. From my experience of 6,000 miles of desert travel I judge that every 1,000 men, with the usual proportion of horses in an army, would require 500 camels for water alone, and at least 800 more for ammunition, supplies, forage, etc. This is what renders all long desert routes impossible for a European army. If Gen. Herbert Stewart succeeded, not without much suffering from hunger and thirst, in crossing the level Bahiuda plains (as will be seen later), it was because the distance was only 150 miles, the desert less arid, and the wells much closer than the average; besides which he had

3,500 camels for 2,500 men in the lightest possible marching order, for his rations gave out on the road.

This vital necessity of a certain and abundant supply of water makes it self-evident that no British army, even if no larger than 4,000 or 5,000 men, can operate in the Soudan except along the Nile, which is the *only* unfailing supply.

Had this fact been recognized in time, four months would not have been wasted in vacillating about the route, and these four months gained would have saved Gordon.

I make the charge without reserve or hesitation, that the failure of Wolseley's relief expedition was due to no other cause than the inconceivable and inexcusable ignorance of the British civil and military authorities in Egypt concerning the country which they had virtually occupied for more than six years; surely time enough to have learned all about it. More than this, no greater mistake could be made than to suppose that the Soudan was a *terra incognita*. So far from it, every route from Cairo to the White Nile has been an avenue of trade and travel for a thousand years, and is as well known as was the old national stage road between Baltimore and Wheeling before the days of railroads.

Furthermore, at the War Department in the citadel of Cairo, occupied as head-quarters by the British staff, there is any number of the most accurate and complete maps and reports of that region, made by French, English, Italian, and American engineers, officers, and explorers—some as recent as 1878, and containing the most minute information. Most of these documents are to be found also in the principal libraries of Europe and America. So



that ignorance of the geography, topography, and water supply of the Soudan routes was absolutely inexcusable, especially in a military staff whose first duty was to learn these very things.

There are three routes from Cairo to Khartoum. (See the map.)

I. By the Nile to Korosko, crossing the desert and striking the Nile again at Abou-Hamed.

II. By the Nile all the way on or along the river.

III. By Suez and the Red Sea to Suakim. Thence across the desert to Berber, and thence to Khartoum by the river.

Let us examine them in order.

I. The first follows the Nile to Korosko, 690 miles above Cairo and 100 miles below the second cataract. Here it leaves the river and strikes across the great bend of the Nile. It is 500 miles shorter than the all-river route, but, although one of the most frequented by caravans, it must be ruled out of military operations, for it crosses one of the worst deserts in the Soudan, consisting of hard gravel plains diversified with zones of deep sand and rocky ridges, without a bush or blade of grass. The camels, which find some grazing on other deserts, have to carry grain on their backs for their own consumption on this one. It is 250 miles across, with only one well—half way—so scanty that it can supply only some 400 camels per day, and so brackish that its name is *Moora-bitter*. None but camels and Bedouins can drink its water. Caravans of 100 or 200 camels cross this desert by forced marches, as I did, in seven days, carrying drinking water to last from Nile to Nile, but no European army could cross it at all. Meeting the river again at

Abou-Hamed, the route follows the river or near it 133 miles to Berber. At this point the Nile again becomes navigable 225 miles to Khartoum. Total distance from Cairo 1,298 miles.

The Korosko desert is one of those that the Arabs call *Atmoors*, in contradistinction from the *Berreeyeh*, or wilderness in which there is vegetation as well as game, and where the Bedouins roam with their flocks, though cultivation is impossible for want of rain. The Atmoors are entirely destitute of vegetation, and consequently of animal life, excepting only the ostrich and hyena, which cross them swiftly by night, and the ever-present vultures hovering over the caravans by day. Nothing relieves the glare of the yellow sand. The marches are terrible, and yet it is worse to halt during the day than to keep in motion, for the fearful heat makes rest or sleep impossible even under the tents, with the burning sand under you and the vertical sun overhead. The Korosko atmoor being one of the great avenues of trade, the trail is perfectly well marked by the skeletons of camels, averaging over 200 to the mile, by my own actual count. Thousands of these animals perish of exhaustion on this route every year. The atmoors are generally from six to ten days' march across, and are like oceans which caravans traverse upon their desert-ships, but where it is death to tarry.

II. The route following the Nile continuously fulfils the paramount condition of insuring an unfailing supply of water, but it presents the disadvantage of being the longest and slowest of all. From an engineer's point of view it is divided into three sections.

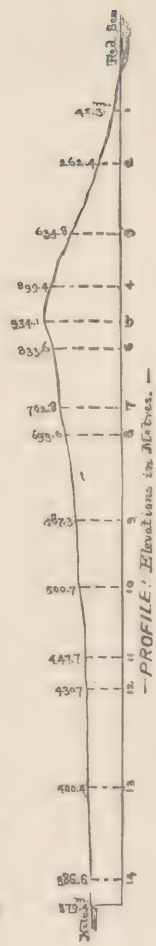
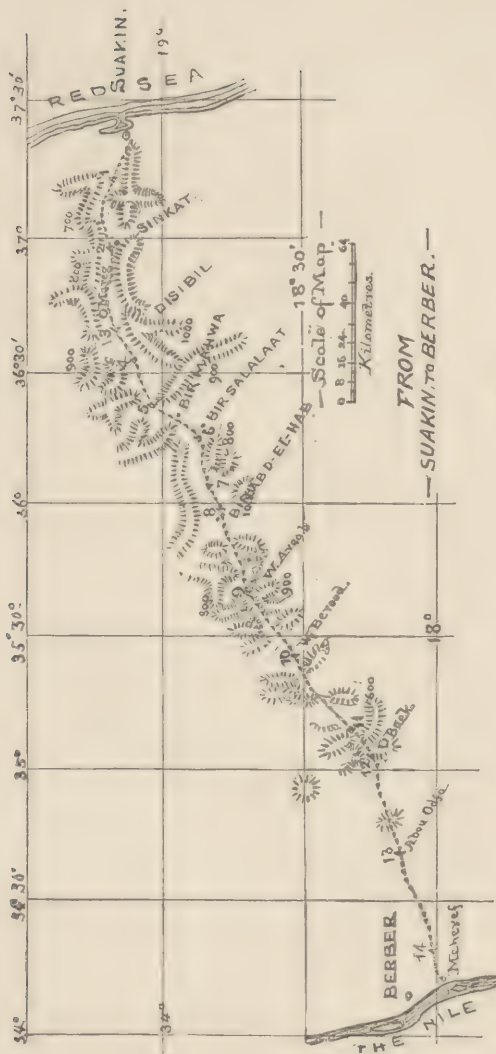
The first, from Cairo to the second cataract (795 miles), is travelled every winter by hundreds of tourists in dala-

beals and Cook's steamers, and is as well known as the Hudson from New York to Albany. It is navigable at all seasons, but always best at high Nile. Trans-shipment is made at the first cataract, by the aid of a five-mile railway around it, but from August to January, small steamers can be hauled over it.

The second section, from the second cataract to Berber, and above to Metemneh, where Genl. Herbert Stewart struck the Nile again after crossing the Bahiuda desert, has been thoroughly explored by the eminent civil-engineer Sir John Fowler, who devoted many winters to surveying and locating the projected Soudan railroad for Ismail-Pasha. Nothing can be more complete than his report, printed in London, together with his map, accurately marked off in sections of fifty kilometers, and from which the accompanying map is partially compiled.\* This section, from the second cataract to Berber, is obstructed by numerous other cataracts, rapids, and shallows, making its navigation very difficult for all but the native craft called *nuggars*. The difficulty of navigating this great double bend, or S, of the Nile is what forces the Soudan trade away from the river at Berber to seek an outlet at Suakim on the Red Sea. It was sadly demonstrated by the tragic fate of Col. O. H. Stewart, in Sept., 1884. Although the Nile was at its highest, and his steamer had passed safely over the fifth cataract (which, when I saw it at low water, seemed impracticable for any boat), he was wrecked at the fourth cataract, half way between Abou-Hamed and Korti, and was massacred by the Bedouins with his entire party. Nevertheless the

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\* This map was engraved for the *Century Magazine*, to illustrate my article on the Soudan, in the No. for March, 1885, and its use has been courteously granted to the Am. Geogr. Soc., by the editors of the *Century*.







entire distance is fairly navigable for the native boats (larger than Wolseley's whale-boats), provided always that advantage is taken, as it should be, of the proper stage of the Nile. It is also quite practicable for the cavalry and artillery horses, with part of the baggage on camels, to follow along the banks of the river, keeping abreast with the boats.

The third section is of easy navigation from Berber to Khartoum, and almost equally so thence nearly to the great equatorial lakes. The chief objection to this all-river route is the length of time it consumes.

The last route to be considered is the Suakim-Berber, and as the mistaken predilection in its favor has been the chief cause of the British failure, I will describe it in some detail.

I must be permitted to state here that in an "Open Letter," written in June, 1884, and published in the September No. of the *Century Magazine*, in an illustrated article, written as early as September, 1884, though published in the *Century* for March, 1885, and in a letter to the *N. Y. World* of March 1, 1885, I proved conclusively that the Suakim-Berber route is utterly impossible for a European army, while hostile Bedouins hold the deserts. I predicted further that the projected railroad would never be built, and that the British would never advance twenty miles from Suakim, all of which predictions were verified by subsequent events.

I am not astonished that the Suakim route was the favorite with those ignorant of its difficulties. It looks so very easy and rapid *on the map*: 120 miles by rail from Cairo to Suez; 900 miles by steamer, in four days, to Suakim; 250 miles to Berber, which caravans travel in

ten days ; thence 225 miles along the river to Khartoum—altogether 1,500 miles, and twenty-five days would cover the distance.

Yes, if an army could move over the country as easily as a pencil across the map, or even as a party of travellers in time of peace, this would certainly be *the* route. How prone are stay-at-home critics to imagine that at ten thousand miles' distance they can judge of the routes to be followed better than those on the spot. It was just so in this case. The journey is all quick and easy enough, except that two hundred and fifty miles' stretch to Berber, which is an impassable barrier in time of war for an army which cannot move in fractions at several days' interval, but must keep together before the enemy. This route is utterly impracticable for these reasons :

It crosses a rainless desert, not nearly so arid as that of Korosko, but yet affording nothing for the subsistence of men or horses. Though caravans can cross it in ten days, an army with its *matériel* would require twenty-five at least (the British staff said thirty), *if they encountered no opposition*. Where a caravan can find water and grazing for its few camels, an army would perish for want of both. A march of fifteen miles from Suakim would bring the army to the foot of the great Arabian chain which begins at Suez and runs parallel to the Red Sea down to the equator. Many of its peaks rise to eight thousand feet, its passes, or "gaps" being from two to three thousand. *It is eighty miles across*, consisting of several parallel ridges separated by deep valleys. Beyond this chain, a plateau extends one hundred and sixty miles farther to the Nile, very broken and abounding in narrow, steep rocky or sandy passes, where a caravan is

compelled to move in single file. For this entire distance the water supply is barely sufficient for small caravans.

It often happened to me, travelling in the Soudan with only two hundred men and four hundred camels (a larger caravan than the average), to find the wells I depended upon just exhausted by a preceding caravan. I would then have to wait from one to three days for the water to ooze in again sufficiently to enable me to replenish my water-skins, and I would leave the wells exhausted for the next comers.

Now, remembering that General Graham, with four thousand choice troops, came so near being destroyed in the plain, within fifteen miles of Suakim, it is evident that no army could venture to advance through the mountains inhabited by the most warlike Bedouin tribes, and the deserts beyond, with less than six or seven thousand men, requiring for the transportation of water, ammunition, supplies, baggage, and forage for all the animals, not less than eight or ten thousand camels. How could such a force find water enough when the best wells on the route cannot supply over six hundred in twenty-four hours?

“Suppose that the fierce Bedouins, whose homes are in these mountains, have allowed the British, strung out in a long, slender column vulnerable at every point, to cross the numerous defiles where a few hundred men could stop a whole army. Suppose the invaders to have emerged without serious losses from the mountain range out upon the plateau extending to the Nile, and which itself is very rugged and abounding in difficult passes and belts of deep, loose sand,—the toughest obstacles of all. The worst is yet to come. Water was comparatively plentiful in the mountains, and the heat was moderate. But now the only supply is from the scanty wells upon the line of march. The Bedouins retreat, destroying the wells behind them (which is a very easy thing to do), and swarms of them hang around the flank and rear of the invaders to harass them and cut off their stragglers. The heat rises every day above one hundred degrees, even in November and December, and one hundred and fifty degrees and more in summer: in that cloudless land



there is no shade. The plain quivers under the fierce sunlight, while the mirage deludes the eyes with the mockery of fictitious lakes. This is what I experienced day after day on the deserts. Suppose now the invaders to have consumed their supply of water. If the enemy can cut them off from the wells for three days, there is no need of firing another shot. Not a soul of them can survive. It is the story of the Roman legions perishing in the Parthian deserts, and of Hicks-Pasha in Kordofan.

"In the 'Waterless Land' water is the paramount question. If it be asked how a large body of Bedouins, like the ten thousand who nearly destroyed the British squares at Tamâf, manage to subsist, the reason is plain. In the first place, they do not need the enormous trains required for a European army. They are the most abstemious of men. Each man carries a skin of water and a small bag of grain, procured by purchase or barter from caravans. Their camels and goats move with them, supplying them with milk and meat, and subsisting upon the scanty herbage and the foliage of the thorny mimosa growing in secluded wadies. As to water, they know every nook and hollow in the mountains, away from the trails, where a few barrels of water collect in some shaded ravine, and they can scatter, every man for himself, to fill their water-skins. On my first expedition, near the close of the three years' drought, I reached some wells on which I was depending, and found them entirely dry. It was several days to the next wells. But my Bedouin guides knew some natural reservoirs in the hills about six miles away from the trail. So they took the water camels at night-fall, and came back before morning with the water-skins filled. An invading army would find it hard to obtain guides, and even if they did, they must keep together, and could not leave the line of march to look for water. Besides, the Bedouins, accustomed from infancy to regard water as most precious and rare, use it with wonderful economy. Neither men nor animals drink more than once in forty-eight hours. As to washing, they *never* indulge in such wasteful nonsense. When Bedouins came to my camp, water was always offered them. Their answer would frequently be: 'No, thanks; I drank yesterday.' They know too well the importance of keeping up the habit of abstemiousness. No wonder they can subsist where invaders would quickly perish."\*

A railroad was proposed as a solution of the difficulty; this only proved the total ignorance of those who suggested it as to the conditions and circumstances of the case. No one denies that a railroad can be built in time of peace across the Arabian chain without much more difficulty than across the Alleghany range (excepting the lack of water and timber), but even then it would be

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\* Extract from my "Open Letter" to the *Century*, published in the September No., 1884.

a work of a year or two ; and Gordon had to be relieved in a few months, or it would be too late, as the sad result proved. It seems to have been imagined that the Suakim desert was a level sand-plain on which there was nothing to do but to lay the rails. Every engineer knows how difficult it would be and how long it would take to construct a railroad over such a range of mountains, through which not even a preliminary survey had ever been made outside of the regular camel trail. Yet two ridiculously abortive attempts were made, as will be seen further.

I have already charged that the failure of Wolseley's relief expedition was due to ignorance of the country in which it was to operate. Here is proof positive that this ignorance was absolutely inexcusable. This Suakim route has been travelled by hundreds of caravans every year from time immemorial, and every well upon it is better known than a corner grog-shop is to all the toppers on its block. It had been repeatedly and accurately mapped out years ago. In addition, one of many explorers, my friend and comrade, Col. H. G. Prout, now of New York, a most able engineer, twice promoted for efficient and valuable services in the Soudan, and for a time Vice-Governor-General under Gordon in 1877-79, was sent to join my expedition in Kordofan in 1875. I had gone there by the Nile route some months before ; he came by the Suakim route, and he was ordered to make a detailed map, survey, and report of it, especially as to the water supply and the feasibility of constructing a railway. The report (which lies before me now), printed in English, with map and profile, at the staff printing-office, in the citadel of Cairo, contains the most ample information (the map and profile accompany this

paper). It mentions every group of wells on the route, and their capacity. The largest can supply only 600 men and their animals ; others vary from 500 down to 250, the average being about 400. I passed over the same route the following year, and can confirm from personal observation the perfect accuracy of Col. Prout's report. This document was perfectly accessible to the British authorities, and a couple of hours' study of it would have convinced any intelligent staff officer that the Suakim route is out of the question for an army. This information conveyed to head-quarters should have put a stop to all the fatal vacillations and delays that followed. Why this neglect of a proper and necessary study of the theatre of war ? Was it stolid stupidity, or was it conceit which took it for granted that what was not already known to the British commanders was not worth learning ? This blind preference for the Suakim route was the paramount and fatal blunder which caused the final failure of the relief expedition, for its consequence was the loss of four or five months in repeated changes of plan, as follows :

(1) Official announcements published at the time show that when Gordon's pressing appeals for help aroused a popular sentiment demanding his relief (which was before Graham's army had re-embarked from Suakim, April 1st), this officer was expected to open the road from there to Berber : but he was too skilful and judicious to attempt such an impracticable undertaking, and the idea was given up.

(2) At the beginning of May, at the very time that Mr. Gladstone was declaring in the Commons that "the Mahdi was waging a war for freedom and should not be put

down," orders were issued for a survey of the Nile route by Admiral Hay, with a view to ascertain its practicability for gun-boats;—an order ridiculous in itself, for the whole course of the Nile had been described a hundred times before. At the same time a camel-depot was ordered to be established at Assouan (first cataract) for the transportation of the expedition.

(3) On the 11th of June the Suakim route was decided upon, and on the 16th engineers were sent there with the plant for a railroad, and on July 19th iron-clad cars were sent. As late as July 12th this announcement was made public: "The operations for the relief of Khartoum, it has been finally decided, will begin early in September. Gen. Wolseley continues to advise that the line of the chief attack be by way of Suakim and Berber. Additional material for the new railway is being sent to Suakim. The preparations for an expedition up the Nile have been suspended."

(4) Lastly (Aug. 18th), it was announced officially that the Suakim route was abandoned. The railroad material, landed one month before, was shipped off to India, and the Nile route was finally adopted. It was not till after this date that boats were ordered to be constructed in England, Canadian voyageurs enlisted, and transportation and supplies collected. Four changes of programme and four months wasted before the first serious preparations were even commenced! \*

But even after all these vacillations, when the Nile route was finally decided upon (near the end of August),

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\* It will be seen later that three months after Gordon's death and the fall of Khartoum another railroad plant was sent to Suakim, which railroad Graham's second expedition was expected to construct to Berber, and which was also sent back without being even unshipped.



the military authorities proceeded with as much deliberation as if they had had full control of the seasons.

It is an axiom that in war, time is an element of the first importance. How especially so in a country where military operations can be carried on only for a few months of the year! The Nile is as regular as the sun. It begins to rise about the 21st of June, rises steadily until about Sept. 1st, remains at its full until about Oct. 1st, and then decreases regularly until the next June. It does not vary more than five or six days from year to year in centuries, and to ignore these facts, known to the world since Herodotus wrote, 400 years B.C., is unpardonable. Had the Nile route been decided upon in May, boats could have been built or collected and every preparation made for the expedition to leave Cairo July 15th, when the Nile had been for nearly four weeks on the rise. It was perfectly clear navigation to the second cataract which should have been reached by Aug. 15th. Then, with a steadily rising Nile, the passage of the upper cataracts would have been easy. Korti could have been reached fully four months earlier, and full advantage could have been derived from the cool season which is delightful in those regions. The fall of Khartoum and the death of Gordon are the direful consequences of that fatal delay.

Nevertheless, late as it was when the final decision was adopted, no attempt seems to have been made to compensate for the lost time. Wolseley did not reach Egypt until Sept. 9th, and the camel-corps organized in England did not sail from there until Sept. 26th. The whale-boats ordered from England did not leave the second cataract at Wady Halfa until the 19th of Nov., and altogether the fact seemed to be ignored that the Nile was steadily falling,

and that cataracts and shallows which could easily be passed at the right season would become altogether impassable at low Nile.

Yet the military authorities had abundant warnings of the danger of delay, as can be seen by a perusal of the journals of that date. Sir Samuel Baker's letter of April 5, 1884, is so truly prophetic of what followed, that I quote a few passages. The italics are my own.

"In this we see a continuation of that spasmodic policy which has characterized every operation in Egypt since the first shot was fired at the forts of Alexandria. There has been no carefully organized plan, no definite aim, no foundation for the edifice of a future; but a hand-to-mouth series of attempts, each of which has been a direct contradiction of our most solemn declarations.

"For the last two years with regretful accuracy I have expressed my opinion upon the present and future of Egyptian affairs. Dark as the present may be, the coming events will be still darker, unless the policy of Great Britain shall be radically changed. The country is bankrupt; brigandage, which was formerly unknown, is rampant even in the Delta (seventy-four cases within one month); the Soudan is in a blaze of insurrection, and *General Gordon in a most dangerous position*, as by a letter I received from him of the 11th of March, *he doubts the possibility of defending Khartoum beyond a certain period.*

"Will England permit this sacrifice? We have been a grievous curse to Egypt, and we are entirely responsible for the miseries and disasters which have befallen this unhappy country. It may suit the convenience of British officials to pooh-pooh the gravity of the situation which they have themselves provoked, but the facts are patent to all: the crisis has arrived, *and unless immediate preparations shall be made for the relief of General Gordon at Khartoum, we shall be again too late, as we were at Tokar and Sinkat.* What will be the humiliation of England should he fall through the apathy or incompetence of the British Government?

"*I do not wish to prophesy evil, but I see it.* Let the British public awaken to the facts of the situation; England is responsible for the misdeeds of her Ministry, and she is the guaranty for the safety of General Gordon, who was started upon an impossible enterprise. As we invaded Abyssinia to release a British consul, we are bound to deliver our envoy at Khartoum should his retreat be intercepted.

"*Not a day should be lost in preparing for this necessity.* The route from Suakim to Berber can only be opened and secured by Indian troops. *The Nile will afford the most secure route from Cairo to Khartoum if immediate preparations shall be made for an expedition at the first rise of the river in July.* I have already suggested to the highest authority this plan of advance, which requires the most careful but energetic management. Still I have no hope that such energy will be exhibited; *the apathy and vacillation which have induced a series of dis-*

*asters will stave off the evil hour until one more garrison shall have been overpowered ; but should Khartoum fall, and Gordon be thus cruelly abandoned, let the Government beware of the scorn of the British people."*

"Apathy and vacillation." The latter, especially, was the fatal cause which paralyzed diplomatic as well as military decisions. I have already mentioned the Ministry's contradictory course regarding the intervention of Turkish troops. Yet in a pecuniary view alone, how much cheaper to have paid a few millions to the Sultan for Turkish regiments! Going there as the soldiers of the Padishah, the chief of Islam, no religious antagonism could have existed between them and the Soudanese. They would have appeared as the representatives of the lawful head of their religion, commissioned to put down a schismatic, false prophet; while, on the contrary, the British represented what is most hateful to a Mussulman, an infidel and a *giaour*. This alternative had been rejected. There was another even more promising, and to this day it is an unexplained mystery why it was abandoned. The great empire of Abyssinia is contiguous to the theatre of war in the Soudan. Its people are Christians of a very rude and barbarous type. They are of the same or a kindred race with the Bedouins of the deserts, and are equally indomitable warriors. They had defeated in 1876 on the plain of Gura an invading Egyptian army of fifteen thousand regular troops, splendidly armed and equipped, which they attacked with the same reckless bravery as that displayed by the Bedouins against the British squares. The Egyptians escaped annihilation only by retreat into a large fort previously constructed by an American officer (Col. S. H. Lockett), from which they repelled several furious assaults. They

were glad enough later to conclude a peace, and be allowed to return to their own country.\* The Abyssinians' most ardent desire is to obtain an outlet on the Red Sea, from which they have been entirely shut out by Egypt. Early in April Admiral Hewett went on a mission to King John. It was stated at various times that the latter was willing to furnish thirty thousand or more men for two shillings per head per day, provided he was given the port of Massowah and a strip of territory along the Red Sea. It was the very best arrangement that could have been made, and it was only a question of money, for those people are extremely avaricious. England could have secured King John's co-operation for one fifth the cost of her expeditions, and it would probably have saved Gordon; for the Abyssinians, accustomed to the climate and the country, would have had but a short distance to march from their own territory down the Blue Nile and the Rahat, relieving the garrisons of Kassala and Sennaar, and reaching Khartoum from the southeast without difficulty. Why the arrangement was not concluded is not known. Probably British pride revolted at the idea of Gordon's being rescued by an army of barbarians. The last information on the subject was a dispatch from Admiral Hewett, received on the 12th of June.

"In this the Admiral reported that his mission to King John, of Abyssinia, was completely successful. A treaty was signed securing free transit from the Soudan through Abyssinia to Massowah. Another treaty, suppressing the slave trade, was negotiated. Admiral Hewett telegraphed also that he had reached the coast of the Red Sea, ready to embark on his return."

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\* A very interesting account of the Abyssinian war with Egypt in 1874-76 is given in "Moslem Egypt and Christian Abyssinia." New York: Atkins & Prout, 1880. By Col. Wm. McE. Dye, formerly U. S. A. (at that time on the general staff of the Egyptian army), who was wounded in the battle of Gura.



It is evident that he had accomplished nothing of any value, in spite of the assertion of complete success.

In the meantime, Gordon had every reason to believe himself abandoned by his own government.

"The Egyptian correspondence shows that the Government refused to allow Indian troops to relieve General Gordon, on the ground that India has no direct interest in the Soudan. Among the dispatches included in the correspondence is one from Earl Granville to Sir Evelyn Baring, suggesting that British troops be dispatched to Wadi-Halfa to support General Gordon. To that dispatch Sir Evelyn Baring replied that the military authorities deprecated the proposed movement on account of the climate. On April 9th, General Gordon telegraphed that three thousand Turkish infantry and one thousand cavalry could accomplish the relief of Khartoum, and crush the Mahdi in four months. Sir Evelyn Baring telegraphed to Earl Granville that it would be impossible to organize a Turkish force in time to be of any use, and that to dispatch troops of the Sultan would involve political difficulties. On April 23, Earl Granville telegraphed to Mr. Egerton as follows :

"General Gordon should be immediately instructed to keep us informed in regard to any immediate or prospective danger at Khartoum, and that, in order to be prepared for such danger, he should advise us in regard to the force necessary to secure his removal. We do not propose to supply him with a force for the purpose of making military expeditions, such being beyond the scope of his commission and contrary to the pacific policy which was the purpose of his mission."

Every pretext seems to have been used to refuse aid. Granville's dispatch is absurd on the very face of it. What good could Gordon accomplish by informing him of any immediate or prospective danger at Khartoum, when it would take four months after the receipt of his telegraphic dispatch before any relief could reach him? And what an abuse of words to speak of "the pacific policy which was the purpose of his mission," when Graham had just been slaughtering thousands of Bedouins on the shores of the Red Sea!

Left to his own resources, Gordon made the best dispositions in his power. The Mahdi having refused his overtures and having attacked him at Khartoum, Gordon sallied out against him on the 16th of March, but was re-

pulsed in a hard fight at Halfiyeh, just outside of Khartoum, by the treachery of two black chiefs whom he had made pashas, and who were summarily tried and shot a few days later. Having exhausted the gold he had brought from Cairo, he issued bills which the merchants accepted upon his personal guaranty, as well as paper and leather money for circulation, and in this way he procured funds for soldiers and supplies. He raised an army by promising freedom to slaves who enlisted in his ranks. He protected that army from the attacks of a superior force by planting torpedoes in front of his lines. He converted his small river steamers into gun-boats by plating them with iron and building turrets on them.\* But in spite of all his efforts he was already enmeshed in the fatal net which he was doomed never to break through.

By the end of March the whole country south of Berber was in a state of revolution, and Gordon had almost daily fights with the enemy, and in the latter half of April his head-quarters at the Khartoum palace were assaulted by the rebels' fire from the opposite shore. By the beginning of May the Arabs, crossing the Blue Nile, had established themselves at Buri, a mile from the eastern corner of the entrenchments. At this spot the besiegers suffered terribly from the mines which General Gordon had laid down. As early as the middle of April Gordon had begun to have recourse to this method of disposing of his assailants. On May 7th, nine mines (according to Mr. Power's diary) were exploded during

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\* They were not over sixty or seventy feet long, and had been brought in sections to Berber on camel-back during Baker's governorship. I travelled down on one of them from above Khartoum to Berber in January, 1876, and was frequently grounded, once, among others, at Shabluka where Sir Charles Wilson came to grief.

an attack, and one hundred and twenty of the Mahdi's men were blown to pieces.

In the meantime Berber was captured and its garrison massacred, as well as a number of its inhabitants, on the 26th of May. So closely was Gordon invested that it was not until the 25th of June that he and his companions had the first news of this additional disaster which isolated them still more from the outer world. Nevertheless they continued their defence with renewed vigor. On July 9th Gordon drove the rebels out of Buri (see plan of Khartoum), killed numbers of them, capturing quantities of rifles and ammunition, and driving the enemy out of thirteen zeribas or stockades, which they had constructed on the river banks. Mr. Power's diary closes at the end of July, up to which date Gordon had lost seven hundred men. He continued the defence so energetically that after three months the siege was raised. Descending the river in four steamers, with troops and cannon, he bombarded and destroyed Berber in September, and drove the rebels from Shendy and all the other positions that they held along the river. But it was impossible for his steamers to navigate beyond Berber. He tried, however, to establish communication with Dongola, and for this purpose he sent his trusty companion, Colonel O. H. Stewart, Vice-Consul Power, with Mr. Herbin the French consul, twelve Greeks and other refugees, in the lightest steamer that he had, hoping that the Nile being at full height they might get over the cataracts. By wonderful good luck they passed through the fifth, but near the fourth cataract the steamer struck on a rock, and sank so suddenly that Colonel Stewart and his party barely escaped to the west bank

without having time to arm themselves. There they were met by some Bedouins of the Monassir tribe, who professed friendly intentions and invited them to take shelter in two native houses, where the whole party were ruthlessly murdered, except a stoker and four sailors. It was learned afterwards that Gordon, hopeless as to his own fate, had sent Stewart away to save him from the destruction that he foresaw. For a time Gordon's steamers enabled him to send foraging parties up and down the river, by which means he secured ample supplies for the garrison and the people. There is but little doubt that if he had thought only of his own safety he might at that time have escaped with a small body of picked men, by steaming up the river to the equator and taking his chances of making his way across to Zanzibar. But all his steamers together could not transport over eight hundred men, and his departure would leave Khartoum and all its helpless inhabitants to the same fate that had befallen the people of Berber. It is needless to say that Gordon would have died a hundred times sooner than seek his own safety by abandoning his post and the people who trusted him.

From that time the cords drew closer and tighter about him. The enemy planted along the river the Krupp guns they had captured from Hicks and at El Obeid, and seriously impeded the movements of the steamers. But Gordon's energy never relaxed, and what is most wonderful, though a great part of the population was disaffected, and many of his soldiers deserted him, yet so great was the power of his character that the rest remained faithful to him to the last moment. How many times in those weary days must he have gazed with anxious eyes down



the Nile, watching in vain for the approach of the relief which never came until it was too late !

While he was thus continuing his heroic struggle, let us see what was being done for his rescue.

We have already seen that it was not until the 18th of August that the Suakim route was finally abandoned, and the Nile route adopted, but there was still time to achieve success, if an energetic effort had been made to redeem the precious time already lost. Unfortunately more time yet was wasted in useless delays. General Wolseley, the hero of the holiday campaign of Tel-el-Kebir, in high favor in court circles, and proclaimed (very erroneously) by his admirers as England's *only* general, was just then receiving an ovation in London, and he was called in to advise the Ministry. Having gained his first laurels by the use of whale-boats and Canadian voyageurs in the Red-River expedition in 1870, he insisted that the same means were absolutely necessary on the Nile. A dispatch, dated "War Office, August 8, 1884," was addressed to Lieutenant-General Stephenson, by the Marquis of Hartington, detailing the plan adopted for the expedition up the Nile for the relief of Gordon, which plan was evidently drawn up by Lord Wolseley. It proposed the use of small boats for transportation beyond the second cataract, "such as were employed in the Red-River expedition."

To this Lieutenant-General Stephenson replied by telegraph : "Small boats proposed not suitable. Can procure large amount water transport locally."

Being a practical soldier, and gifted with the common-sense and ability to make use of the means that he found at hand, he saw the folly of wasting invaluable time

waiting for boats to be built in England, while plenty better suited for the purpose could be had on the spot. But his curt condemnation of Lord Wolseley's pet idea, no doubt, cost the lieutenant-general the command of the Nile expedition, and unfortunately caused the appointment of the originator of the plan; for on August 26th, he received from the War Office the following telegram:

"After anxious consideration, her Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that it is unjust to you to ask you to be responsible for directing an operation which, after full knowledge of plan, you consider to be impracticable. They have, therefore, decided to send Lord Wolseley to take temporarily the chief command in Egypt. Government highly appreciate the manner in which you have carried out the important and difficult duties of your command, and earnestly hope that you may feel yourself able to remain in Egypt whilst Lord Wolseley is there, and assist him with your advice."

Lieutenant-General Stephenson promptly replied: "Will willingly remain here as you wish." Thus it followed that three months more were lost while the boats were being built and the voyageurs were being enlisted in Canada, so that it was the 19th of November before the first division of the expeditionary force was ready to start from Wady Halfa, in eight hundred whale-boats. Judging from the illustrations in the *London Graphic*, from drawings made on the spot, it must have been a very brilliant spectacle, the white-painted whale-boats, in double file, each covered with an awning, towed by steamers, the soldiers sitting comfortably smoking their pipes with all the ease of pleasure tourists. It seemed like a parade or a review, and must have looked very picturesque—*mais ce n'était pas la guerre*. No doubt the expedition appeared much more symmetrical, much more pleasing to a martinet's eye than if it had been transported in the common rough country boats. I am

not able to state what was the expense in money of this extra-smartness of appearance, but I know this: its ultimate cost was Gordon's life, and the success of the relief expedition. How could Wolseley fail to understand that no superiority of English boats and Canadian voyageurs (which was by no means proved by the performance) could compensate for the delay it involved? When it is remembered that the advance of the relieving force reached Khartoum only three days after Gordon's death, can there be any doubt that the catastrophe would have been averted by the saving of two or three weeks, not to say months, of the time so unnecessarily wasted?

And yet Gordon's situation must have been perfectly well known to General Wolseley. In a letter dated Sept. 9th Gordon said: "We have sufficient money and provisions to last four months. At the end of that time we shall be much embarrassed."

Another letter, published in the official "Egyptian Blue-Book," addressed to General Lord Wolseley, dated November 4th, says:

"I have five steamers and nine guns at Metemneh awaiting your orders. I can hold out forty days longer with ease. After that it will be difficult. The loss of Colonel Stewart is terrible. I told him to give you all the information possible. He had my journal from January 3 to September 10. The Mahdi is eight miles from Khartoum. Sennaar is all right. My journal from September 10 to date is on board one of the steamers which you will find at Metemneh. I continue to have occasional fights with the Arabs. It is rumored that all the Europeans with the Mahdi, including Slatin Bey and the nuns, have become Mussulmans. Lupton Bey has surrendered. I have sent out scores of messengers in all directions during the last eight months. Do not send private letters to me, the risk is too great. Do not write to me in cipher. I have none and it is of no use. The Mahdi knows every thing. Take the road from Ambukol to Metemneh. You need not fear the Mahdi. Both the Greek consul and the Austrian consul are safe. The Mahdi has captured a letter from the king of Abyssinia to me. Your expedition, as I understand, is for the relief of the garrison of Khartoum, which I failed to accomplish. I decline to admit that it is for the rescue of me personally."

It was evident from this that Gordon considered it impossible to hold out beyond Jan. 1st at the latest, and that Wolseley was aware of it. But even after the start was made, Wolseley's advance was unaccountably slow, for he took forty days to reach Korti, 400 miles, with only 6,000 men, while 4,000 more were still below Dongola. If his excuse was the difficulties of navigation, they could have been avoided by starting when the river was high. He was now (Dec. 16th) at the great bend of the Nile, where it changes its course from south-west to north, 160 miles from Abou-Hamed and about the same from Metemneh. He was at last within striking distance of the enemy and might expect an attack at any moment. Strategy dictated concentration, instead of which he sent off General Herbert Stewart, on the 30th, across the Bahiuda desert to Gakdul wells, 97 miles off, with 1,150 men and 2,000 camels. Leaving the troops there, Stewart returned to Korti and went back on the 8th of January with 1,500 more men and as many camels. By this time more troops having reached Korti, Wolseley, without waiting to see the result of Stewart's movement, sent away General Earle up the Nile towards Abou-Hamed, at right angle with Stewart's direction, with 2,500 men, while he remained at Korti with an equal number, entirely beyond supporting distance of those two detachments which were now several days' march from him.

Meanwhile Stewart left a small force to hold Gakdul wells—which, by the way, are not wells at all, but natural rock reservoirs of rain-water, much preferable to wells as long as their water holds out. Thence he advanced towards another reservoir at Abu-Klea, twenty-



three miles from the Nile, but he found the enemy barring the way, about three thousand strong, in two divisions. On Saturday, Jan. 17th, Stewart, leaving his baggage in a zeriba, moved his force of fifteen hundred men in square formation, with artillery at the angles. The British passed around the flank of the enemy who then wheeled and charged furiously upon the front of the square. Recoiling from the terrible fire which met them there, they turned and attacked the rear of the square, where a cavalry and a camel regiment (dismounted) were stationed. This side of the square was broken, "owing, it is said, to the unruly conduct of the camels, which got powder-burned and became unmanageable." The British maintained a hand-to-hand conflict with admirable steadiness, while the other parts of the square and the enfilading fire of the artillery did terrible execution. It was while rallying and reforming the broken square that the gallant Colonel Burnaby, the hero of twenty battles and of the "Ride to Khiva," was killed. He had cut down one Bedouin and was parrying the sword-thrusts of another, when a third rushed past him, turned around, and pierced him in the neck with his spear. The enemy were finally driven back, leaving eight hundred slain around the square.

By five o'clock the Hussars had possession of the wells, where the troops remained to rest and procure water until four o'clock of the afternoon of the 18th. With the purpose of striking the Nile above Metemneh, General Stewart turned slightly to the right after passing the wells of Shebacat.

"Nothing was seen of the enemy until sunrise on the 19th, when the troops arrived at a point some five miles distant from the Nile. The Soudanese were then

seen to be in great force between our troops and the Nile, and mainly gathered about some intervening ridges. General Stewart, however, as the troops had been marching all night, determined that the men should not fight upon empty stomachs, and called a halt.

"The troops were promptly dismounted, and the first care of the General was to form a zeriba. The camels were unloaded and a fortification was thrown up, composed principally of the saddles and baggage. The hospital was placed in the centre, protected by Gardner and Gatling guns. All the while the men were constructing the zeriba, a hot fire was kept up by the enemy's sharpshooters, who were concealed behind bushes and high grass on all sides.

"Their fire was, on the whole, well directed, and had most disastrous effect, General Stewart himself being severely wounded in the thigh. Altogether twelve were killed and forty wounded here. Mr. Cameron, the correspondent of the *Standard*, and Mr. St. Leger Herbert, representing the *Morning Post*, were also shot dead. Mr. Burleigh, of the *Daily Telegraph*, was slightly wounded. The command now devolved by seniority upon Sir Charles Wilson.

"When the zeriba was nearly completed, the force was formed into a square and the advance was sounded at 2 P.M. The front of the square was composed of the Naval Brigade and Grenadiers, the right flank of the Coldstreams, Scots Guards, and part of the Heavy Corps, and the left flank of the Mounted Infantry, while the Sussex Regiment and the remainder of the Heavy Corps brought up the rear.

"After the British force had advanced for about two miles, the enemy also began to move forward in two large bodies in echelon. They first directed their attack on our right front, toward which they charged, but our men stood perfectly steady and delivered a terrific fire into their midst, mowing them down in heaps. So telling was each volley that none of the attacking force could get within sixty yards of our front line, though they made three desperate charges. Our loss here was six killed and twenty-three wounded. The guns were worked admirably by Captain Norton of the Royal Artillery, and did immense execution.

"While one body of the enemy was thus fruitlessly attacking the square, another body, mostly on horseback, made for the zeriba. The force garrisoning it was made up of detachments of every corps, under the command of Lord Charles Beresford, R.N. The attack on the zeriba was sustained for two hours, when the enemy were compelled to retreat before the fierce fire kept up by the garrison from guns and rifles alike. One man was killed and three wounded while they were helping to erect a small redoubt some fifty yards to the right of the zeriba. This small work, when finished, was held by Lord Cochrane and forty of the Life Guards and Scot Greys, who by their steady fire did much to repel the constant rushes of the enemy.

"The loss of the rebels during the whole day must have been quite 2,000, reckoning both killed and wounded. Among the enemy's forces were many slaves, several of whom gave themselves up to the British. They say the Mahdi sent them from Khartoum.

"At sunset the square reached the Nile, and then encamped for the night. Early next morning the square marched back to the zeriba, and in the evening the

whole force returned to the river, where strong intrenchments were thrown up. The total British loss, including the loss at Abu-Klea, was one hundred and four killed and two hundred and sixteen wounded.

"On Tuesday we moved forward through the villages surrounding Metemneh, and on Wednesday morning a reconnoissance in force was made of the place itself. It proved to be tolerably well fortified. Some shots were fired from the Gardner and Gatling guns, and the enemy answered occasionally with one gun or with rifle-shots fired through loopholes in the walls. Very little was, however, seen of the defenders, who appeared very unwilling to show themselves. A pleasant surprise, however, was in store for the men, as four of Gordon's steamers arrived on the 21st, which at once landed five hundred men and five guns as reinforcements."

They had left Khartoum about one month before, and reported that Gordon had been fighting hard for two weeks before they left. No doubt he had sent them forward to hasten up the relief which he was looking for. An evidence of his belief in the hopelessness of his situation is the fact that he sent his diaries and other important papers by these steamers, in order that they at least might be preserved, and in an accompanying letter he said that he knew he was being betrayed, but that he was powerless to prevent it.

On the 22d and 23d, Sir Charles Wilson, on Gordon's steamers, bombarded Shendy for two hours with six guns, destroying the town almost completely. Several villages around Metemneh were also burned to the ground, but as it turned out it was a fatal loss of time, for had Sir Charles Wilson started on the 21st as soon as the steamers reached him, he might have arrived in time. It was not until the 24th that he left for Khartoum on two steamers with part of the Sussex regiment, Colonel Boscawen being left in command of the entrenchment at Gubat with about nine hundred men. Lord Wolseley, before hearing of Stewart's victory, had on Monday, the 26th, despatched a strong convoy to Gakdul, followed on

Wednesday, the 28th, by the Royal Irish and the West Kent regiments.

When Sir Charles Wilson started for Khartoum from Metemmeh, his expedition was not supposed to be hazardous. The report that Omdurman had been captured by the Mahdi on the 13th rendered it probable that the steamers might have to run the gauntlet of a few shots when they arrived at the junction of the Blue and White Niles; but this was not regarded as a formidable danger. The vessels continued on their way unmolested, and they reached Halfiyeh on the 28th.

“ Here the banks of the river were lined with rebels, who opened fire with four Krupp guns at the steamer. No material damage seems to have been done, owing, no doubt, to the fact that General Gordon had all the steamers protected as far as possible with plates of iron and other means of keeping out missiles. They discovered that the report that Omdurman had fallen into the hands of the enemy was only too true, and from that position also the enemy opened fire. Things began to look worse when the enemy was found to be in possession of the island of Tuti, which lies at the junction of the two Niles, just outside the city of Khartoum (see plan of Khartoum). Still pressing on under a storm of bullets, they came within hail of Khartoum. To their dismay they found that instead of being welcomed as deliverers, the garrison of the capital took up the fire from which they had been suffering and received them as foes. No flags were flying from the public buildings in the town, which appeared to be in undisputed possession of the enemy. The palace, a well-known building, visible from the river, was to all appearance gutted. Finding it impossible to effect a landing in face of the overwhelming forces of the enemy, they were compelled to retreat out of range, and then endeavor to obtain what information they could by communication with the shore as to the fate which had befallen General Gordon. All reports agreed in asserting that Khartoum was in the hands of the Mahdi, and that the city passed into his possession by treachery.”

Five natives present at the time declared that the officers commanding the three steamers left at Khartoum took the Mahdi's troops to the main gate of the city, where they entered under cover of the night.

It was ascertained later, with a considerable degree of probability, that for several days previous Farragh-Pasha



(a Soudanese promoted by Gordon) had been receiving from the Mahdi proposals for a capitulation; that he had repeatedly pressed Gordon to accept the terms offered, which the latter angrily refused to do; that on the afternoon preceding the capture, Farragh had again urged a surrender, probably showing an insubordinate spirit, and that Gordon, yielding to one of those impulses of ungovernable wrath which were a trait of his character, struck Farragh and drove him from his presence. That night (26th), Farragh being in charge of the ramparts, admitted the enemy within the gates. He soon reaped the just reward of his treason. A few days after the capture he was put to the torture to make him reveal the hiding-place of supposed treasures, after which he was hanged on the public square at Omdurman.

For a few days some doubts were entertained as to Gordon's fate. The most reliable reports assert that the Mahdi had 60,000 men in the vicinity of Khartoum, and that he introduced a number of his emissaries into the city. Those emissaries mingled freely with the native troops under General Gordon, and by bribes, threats, and appeals to their religious feelings induced them to mutiny. Seven thousand of the garrison deserted to the rebels, leaving General Gordon only 2,500 faithful soldiers. A dispatch of Feb. 17th gives the following account of his death, afterwards confirmed by others:

"A cavass of Ibrahim Bey Ruchdi, who accompanied General Gordon from Cairo, has come in from Khartoum. He states that on the morning of the 26th of January he heard a disturbance, and came out with his master to see what was the matter. They met General Gordon, with about 20 cavasses and some notables, coming out of the inner gate. When the party arrived at an open space before the house the rebels met them and fired, killing General Gordon, his secretary, and some others, and the survivors fled. A few soldiers turned out and fired

at one of the gates, but there was scarcely any fighting, and Khartoum was practically taken without firing a shot."

This was followed by a second dispatch :

"KORTI, Feb. 17th, Midnight.

"A messenger attached to the Intelligence Department has come in six days from Nasri, a place about one day's journey from Khartoum. He corroborates the news of the fall of Khartoum and the death of General Gordon. The regular soldiers were marched out of Khartoum into the Njunnit camp, some of them being killed by the Mahdi's troops, who fired on them as they left the town. All the Turkish—*i. e.*, Egyptian soldiers were killed by the rebels, who, however, did not kill the women and children. The men holding Tuti Island also fled. The Austrian consul was killed in his own house, while M. Nicola, the Greek consul, and a doctor were taken alive."

It is believed that about 4,000 of the Greek, Levantine, and Egyptian residents were slaughtered, but the horrors of the massacre that occurred that night will never be fully known.

Such was the tragic fate of one of the most chivalrous and noble-hearted soldiers that ever shed lustre not only upon his own country, but upon the human race.

Khartoum fell on the 26th of Jan., and Sir Charles Wilson arrived in sight of the captured city on the morning of the 28th. Before giving up the attempt to reach it, his steamers sustained for four hours the fire of thousands of riflemen, eight Krupps, and several machine-guns. One man was killed and five were wounded on board the vessels. There was no alternative but to return to Gubat. On the 29th one of the steamers was wrecked and had to be abandoned. On the 31st, according to the report of Lieut. Stuart-Wortley (R. N.), the other steamer, on which were Sir Charles Wilson and his party, was wrecked about four miles above the enemy's position, just below the Shabluka cataract. The steamer, while dropping down stern foremost nearly clear of the cataract, struck hard, and the rock made a large hole

in the bow. She sank to the level of the deck. Sir Charles bivouacked on an island with his party, to which were added some 250 fugitives from Khartoum, whom he picked up along the Nile. His intention was to remain there until relieved. Lieut. Stuart-Wortley, with four Englishmen and eight natives, left at dusk in a row-boat and floated safely by the enemy's works through a few volleys of musketry. They arrived at Gubat at 3 o'clock on the morning of the 1st. Immediately on receiving the news, Lord Charles Beresford, R. N., commanding the Naval Brigade, with the *Sofia*, one of the steamers left at Gubat, manned by British seamen of the Naval Brigade, started up the river to relieve Sir Charles Wilson and his companions. The steamer moved up slowly against the stream, and was not able to get up there before Tuesday (3d). It was fired at incessantly by the enemy's riflemen, who were estimated to be 4,000 strong, and a battery of three Krupp guns, at a point about forty miles above Metemneh. The steamer was almost past the position when a round shot went through the boiler, but the vessel went on some 200 yards with the remaining steam, thus getting away 500 yards from the enemy, whose two guns were in embrasures pointing down the stream. The steamer then anchored, and the *Gardner* and the heavy guns were shifted so as to fire straight to the front. The enemy were then unable to show above the parapet, and dared not move their gun to the only embrasure pointing up stream, but fired wildly from the others. Only the guns' muzzles were visible, and the detachments in charge were unable to point their pieces towards the steamer, because they must have exposed themselves. The enemy had neglected to

provide a covered way for getting out of their rifle-pits, and when any one attempted to leave them, the Gardner and the marksmen speedily accounted for him. Lord Beresford then anchored, and Chief Engineer Henry Bembow, R. N., repaired the boiler under fire. Fortunately the missiles mostly went over the vessel, the range being only 500 yards. Sir C. Wilson, seeing a dense cloud of steam rise, thought that the boiler had burst. He landed his party, guns, etc., on the right bank, and marched down towards the spot, aiding Lord C. Beresford by his fire. Tuesday afternoon and night were spent in the difficult work of effecting repairs. Sir C. Wilson halted for the night a few miles lower down; next morning Lord C. Beresford picked the party up, taking them on to Gubat. •

“The enemy had considered the capture of the steamer a certainty, and when they saw in the morning that she was getting up steam and in sound condition, they were in consternation. The steamer went a couple of hundred yards up stream so as to turn round out of range, and then came down at a speed of nine knots. Mr. Keppel put a shell into the centre of an embrasure. The enemy seemed afraid to show themselves above their defences, and they must have lost heavily by the steamer's fire. The whole party at length got away on the morning of the 4th. The steamer's loss amounted to one seaman killed, seven men wounded, and Lieutenant Van Koughnet, R. N., wounded. Several men were scalded by the outburst of steam. Sir Charles Wilson's loss was two men killed, and twenty wounded—all Egyptians,—and four men of the Sussex Regiment slightly injured.”

Gen. Wilson arrived at Gubat Feb. 6th, and left the same day for Korti.

The revulsion of feeling when the news of Gordon's death reached London was beyond description. The *London Times* of Jan. 30th (weekly edition), after publishing the accounts of Stewart's victory, said in its editorial column :

“It is a new evidence of Gordon's untiring energy and inexhaustible resource that as soon as the relieving expedition touches the Nile, he is ready to offer substantial



assistance. His steamers will now exercise a potent effect upon the fortunes of the campaign, since they not only increase enormously the striking power of the little force encamped at Gubat, but will also enable a helping hand to be held out to General Earle as soon as he reaches the navigable portion of the river. In fact, thanks to them and the heroic exertions of Sir Herbert Stewart, Lord Wolseley now has hold of Khartoum itself, and the military object of the expedition is practically attained. The moral effect of these victories, and of the commanding position they secure, cannot but be enormous, and any further resistance that may be offered by the Mahdi must be of a comparatively broken and ineffectual kind. It now remains to make a wise use of the magnificent results attained by the courage of our troops, and to see that policy shall in some degree rise to the level attained by our arms. Some permanent arrangement must be made for the maintenance of the advantages so dearly bought, and for the enduring settlement of a district consecrated by the blood of brave men, and rendered forever memorable by the extraordinary achievements of General Gordon."

Two days later this very natural exultation was changed into mourning and indignation. A few extracts from the London press will show better than any words of mine the state of public sentiment at the time.

The *Times*, in its editorial discussion of the last news from Egypt, says :

"No words of ours are adequate to express the mingled feelings of dismay, consternation, and indignant disgust which have been universally evoked by this news. The present situation is the lamentable result of a long course of disregard of the elementary maxims of statesmanship. The country is obliged to confess that every thing has been done that could be done to add to the risks of defeat. Advice has been spurned, time wasted, and opportunity lost. The splendid valor of our soldiers, which offered the last chance for retrieving the mistakes of policy, was handicapped by the choice of a line of march which was at the same time long and difficult and without means of communication and without a base of supplies. By the loss of Khartoum, which was his objective point, Lord Wolseley's whole expedition is in the air. Concentration of his forces is the first necessity which confronts Lord Wolseley. But where shall he concentrate? The only effective base is Suakim, and to make this available, Osman Digma must be vanquished, and the road to Berber opened. General Gordon must be saved or avenged. The honor of the country must be vindicated at whatever cost."

In another place the *Times* says :

"The fall of that solitary figure (Gordon), holding aloft the flag of England in the face of hordes of the sons of Islam, will reverberate through every bazaar of Cairo and Calcutta. The result will be a long and deliberate abandonment of respect for the British Government and its officials by the followers of Islam. But England

will save General Gordon, if alive, and if slain, will avenge his death. Woe to his murderers, if he has been killed ! ”

The *Standard* says in its leading article :

“ Let none forget General Gordon's last act of heroism. Though knowing that he had traitors in his camp, he stood by the town and people committed to his charge, and sent his only means of escape to help the British expedition on its way to his relief. He has won undying fame for his country if only by this act. The grievous blow which England has suffered must be met with calm reason, and not with panic passion. All party spirit must be dropped, and a resolution taken by the whole country that the path of precedence and honor points to a recapture of Khartoum. If we shirk this duty, the lives of thousands of British soldiers will have to be risked hereafter in trying to retrieve the blunder.”

The *Morning Post* says :

“ The mouse-trap policy of the Mahdi appears to have had terrible success. It seems that the Mahdi's calculation was to lure the British army into a perilous position. The pressing question of the moment is, ‘ Can Lord Wolseley rescue General Stewart's column ? ’ ”

On the 6th of Feb., the *Times* said :

“ The news of the fall of Khartoum is the worst that has reached this country for many years, and the gravity of the situation so abruptly revealed can neither be concealed nor palliated. Thought serves only to bring home the full meaning of the announcement. It matters little whether the event took place two days or two months before the arrival of Sir C. Wilson ; the goal of the expedition is in the full possession of the enemy : the present operations are at an end. At last the thin ice over which the country has been led for so many weeks has broken up, and we are face to face with dangers which it is useless to attempt to hide. That the mere announcement of the fall of Khartoum should have brought such a complete change over the whole military situation is a sufficient proof of the complete unsoundness of our military policy,—a policy depending on chance for its fulfilment, inadequate and contrary to the great principles of military science, unable to bear the stress of the smallest failure. The expedition has toiled for months up the Nile ; it has made a long desert journey ; it has suffered and fought. But the present emergency finds it still not in possession of Berber, the most important strategic point of all, and the one which, as was pointed out long ago, should have been the first objective. If we were now at Berber, instead of at Gubat, the outlook would be altogether different.\* Berber could be reached in six weeks by fresh troops.† How are we to get to Gubat, to Debbeh, or some point in rear ? There is surely nothing to be gained by minimizing the gravity

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\* Not at all unless the road to Suakim were open.

† Where from and how ? Still clinging to the delusion of the Suakim-Berber route.

of the situation ; the wisest course will be to accept frankly the possibilities with which we are confronted, and to face the danger at once. At Abu Klea there is a force perhaps two hundred and fifty strong, with many wounded. At Gubat there are about nine hundred men, with more wounded. Abu Klea and Gubat have been made strong enough to withstand any direct attack at present, but neither the provisions nor the ammunition supply can be very large. There are the camels, it is true, and there is an ample supply of water. Metemneh is still held by at least two thousand Arabs, whom we cannot now afford to dislodge, and whose proximity constitutes a source of danger under certain circumstances. Two steamers remain at Metemneh apparently, and have doubtless been secured ; but their crews may be treacherous, since the stranding of Sir C. Wilson's steamers may not have been accidental. One infantry regiment is approaching Abu Klea, marching slowly and in detachments across the desert. Another was intended to follow. The wells are held by a force little exceeding a battalion. General Earle is somewhere near Birtch with four regiments. The dispersion of force which has thus been arrived at is extreme, and two courses only present themselves to Lord Wolseley. He may retire his whole force on both lines of advance, and concentrate at Debeh, the strategical importance of which point, in view of a possible advance of the Arabs, has been previously noticed. No position higher up the Nile would be equally secure. Or he may reinforce Gubat, and pressing General Earle's column forward, make the attempt to seize Berber at any sacrifice. The river navigation before the flotilla is, however, very difficult, and weeks must elapse before General Earle can count on reaching Berber ; while, with only two steamers available, to make the attempt from Gubat appears barely possible. We may expect, therefore, that Lord Wolseley will fall back, if it is yet possible to do so, and measures must be taken without a moment's delay to open the Suakim-Berber route at any sacrifice. The option no longer exists ; the step must be taken if the military situation in the Soudan is to be saved. Berber must be taken whatever it may cost. There is no alternative policy of retirement ; the honor of the country must be maintained, even if forty thousand men are required. We have been brought face to face with a grave emergency, and we must meet it like men."

This language was a reflex of the popular feeling, and indicated a natural, although unreasonable, desire for vengeance. The government announced that General Wolseley would be ordered to capture Berber and Khar-toum at any cost, and to inflict the direst punishment upon the rebels. Punishment for what, if those people were justifiable in fighting for their freedom ? Gordon had fallen by a surprise in a night attack, but this was a perfectly legitimate incident of war. The government's

subsequent course made it doubtful whether these menaces were any more than a stratagem to gain the time necessary to calm popular excitement.

The most important, in fact the vital, question just now was whether General Wolseley's forces could be brought back safely from their exceedingly perilous position.

We have already seen that General Wolseley, having arrived within striking distance of an enemy who, one year before, had proved his ability to put 100,000 men in the field, had sent General Herbert Stewart with 2,500 men across the Bahiuda desert, 160 miles, to Gubat; and at the same time, General Earle, with 2,500 men up the Nile, at right angle to Stewart's course. Looking at the map, it will be seen Earle had to follow the river 160 miles to Abou-Hamed, where it makes another sharp elbow, and resumes its north and south direction. From Abou-Hamed to Berber is 133 miles, making up to that point 293 miles of the most difficult navigation, this being by far the worst section of the Nile. From Berber, where it again becomes navigable, to Gubat, is 150 miles. So that Earle would have had to travel 443 miles before he could hope to make his junction with Stewart. The latter had taken with him nearly all the available camel transportation. Earle took the greater part of the water and transportation and could not possibly leave the proximity of the river, while Wolseley at Korti, with 2,500 men, had no transportation of any kind sufficient to move to the support of either Stewart or Earle. Wolseley's army was thus divided into three fractions of 2,500 men, at the three angles of an equilateral triangle of 150- or 160- mile sides—utterly beyond tactical supporting distance of each other, and this in a



country where the enemy would certainly attack the two moving columns separately, and where no supplies could be found, except what the troops carried with them. A more absolute disregard of strategy cannot be conceived.

When Wolseley sent General Herbert Stewart across the desert to Metemneh, it must have been with the expectation of opening communication with Gordon. The steamers would then have transported Stewart's force to Khartoum, and it is to be supposed that Wolseley, leaving a reserve at Korti and strongly occupying the desert route by establishing fortified posts at the wells of Hambok, Abu-Halfa, Gakdul, and Abu-Klea, would himself have moved on to Khartoum. Having then command of the river, he could have sent a force by steamers to occupy Berber within three days after reaching Khartoum. This shows still more manifestly the absurdity of his sending Earle to Berber by the river some three hundred miles, which it would take him over thirty days to travel. The reason alleged by Wolseley was to cover his flank from a possible attack from Berber, but he would have been infinitely safer from a flank or any other movement, if he had kept Earle with him. Now, however, all his calculations were at fault. Khartoum, which he had expected to occupy as his new base, had fallen; Stewart's column was *en l'air*, and if Earle had reached Berber, he would have been isolated there, and in greater danger than before. The first step imperatively demanded was the concentration of the force so rashly scattered. The moment Wolseley was certain of the fall of Khartoum, he should have recalled Earle's column. We will see that it was not until Feb. 14th that Sir

Redvers Buller fell back to Abu-Klea, and the 25th when Earle's column was ordered to concentrate upon Korti.

"In the meantime advices from Gubat, dated February 1st, gave gloomy statements about the condition of General Stewart's little army there. The men had been placed on three-quarter rations. These, however, had been once supplemented with a dole of beans and some fresh meat.

"On the 7th, dispatches from Korti indicated a very serious state of affairs at the British position near Metemneh. Lord Wolseley telegraphed to the War Office that a courier who had just arrived from Gubat reported Colonel Boscawen, the commander at that place, seriously ill, and that the Mahdi's forces were preparing to attack the British camp. The Arabs had several heavy guns, which were being gradually moved up so as to bear on the British camp, and other field-pieces were being manœuvred for the same purpose.

"The main earthworks erected for the protection of the camp from the river front had been greatly strengthened, and it was calculated that they would be completed that night.

"The remainder of the royal artillery, with ten guns, including one Gardner, had arrived. A convoy had been sent back to Gakdul wells for more stores, and had taken forty of the wounded along.

"The force at Gubat on the 9th consisted of twenty-six hundred men, of whom twenty-three hundred were effective, and several guns. But intelligence was received that the Mahdi's forces were advancing from Khartoum to attack the camp with overwhelming numbers.

"By this time Sir Redvers Buller, having arrived at Gubat and taken the command, decided to evacuate the riverside fort and retire to Abu Klea, which he considered a better strategical position. Lord Charles Beresford, who had been patrolling the river with his two steamers, so as to prevent, as far as possible, the enemy from erecting fortifications and securing supplies, abandoned the steamers, rendering them useless to the Mahdi by removing the essential portions of the machinery. (All of them were now destroyed except the three captured by the Mahdi at Khartoum, and the command of the river was now in his hands). On the 14th of February the whole of the troops marched out, halted for the night in the desert, and reached Abu Klea the following day. This retreat was probably due to a skirmish on the 13th inst., from which it was evident that the Mahdi was sending powerful reinforcements to Metemneh. A convoy of wounded had left for Gakdul under Colonel Talbot, and, when about eight miles on the road, was attacked by a large force of the enemy—part coming from Metemneh and part from Khartoum. A sharp little skirmish ensued, but on the appearance of a detachment of light camelry coming from Abu Klea, the enemy disappeared. The convoy met with no further opposition, and reached Gakdul on Tuesday the 17th."

The gallant Herbert Stewart had died of his wound the day before, and was buried at Gakdul wells. A few

days later Sir Redvers Buller retreated to Korti, his troops suffering greatly from hunger, heat, and thirst, and severely harassed by the enemy. So difficult was his retreat, that the English press termed it a miraculous escape.

Let us now look at the operations of Earle's column. This general had left Korti on the 5th of January on his ex-centric movement towards Abou-Hamed. His progress was very slow, his boats finding great difficulty in passing over the shallows and rapids. He occupied nearly fifteen days in reaching Homdab at the fourth cataract, about ninety miles above Korti. The toils and obstacles he had to contend with show how utterly impossible it would have been for Wolseley to give him any support in case of need. While at the fourth cataract, he had a practical demonstration of the folly of wasting the season of high Nile, for the hapless Col. Stewart's steamer wrecked there last September, by striking a rock two feet below the surface, was now to be seen high and dry sixteen feet above water. It was not until the 24th of January that he left Homdab. I quote Wolseley's dispatch of that date, which shows how greatly he underrated the enemy's tenacity of resistance.

"General Earle's column, thoroughly provisioned and equipped, comprising artillery, cavalry, and camel corps, started to-day from Homdab for Berber. The march is to be made by way of Abou-Hamed. The enemy, which includes the entire fighting force of the Monassir tribe, under the command of Wadgamr, who ordered the murder of Colonel Stewart, and the fighting men of other tribes under Moussa, are assembled in war order at Birti. This is forty miles above Homdab, the starting-point of to-day's expedition.

"General Wolseley says that both Wadgamr and Moussa boast that they are determined to give battle. If so, an engagement between these chiefs and General Earle by Monday would seem inevitable. General Wolseley states, however, that the soldiers who go with General Earle are all in the best of health and spirits. They regard General Stewart's battle of last Saturday as a glorious vic-

tory, are proud of the achievements of their comrades, and are anxious to meet the rebels on their own account. General Wolseley declares that the Arabs have been depressed by the news of Stewart's victory, and that its effect has been so great and widespread that, in his opinion, it may properly be considered doubtful if General Earle meets with any serious opposition before reaching Berber."

Why so much delay occurred is not fully explained. It was only on the tenth day after leaving Homdab that Earle had accomplished the forty miles separating him from Birti. Several days were spent in reconnoitring.

"The enemy were found to be entrenched for a distance of half a mile at Birti, parallel to the river, so as to be able to fire on the boats. Their numbers were estimated at from two to three thousand, though the natives report that there are many more. The rapids are consequently to be passed in the following manner: On its arrival at the foot of the rapids, one battalion will disembark, march to the top of the bank, and establish itself there, so as to protect the passage of boats. The next battalion, having brought its boats safely up, will protect the passage of the first, and so on.

"General Earle's cavalry, while reconnoitring, has found the enemy entrenched in a position flanking the river and across the road. Colonel Butler thereupon fell back. The South Staffordshire Regiment is on the island of Dalka, waiting for the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders). On Thursday, February 7th, the camel corps had a skirmish inland with some hostile Arabs, who were driven from the wells where the engagement occurred with a loss of sixty killed and six taken prisoners. The British troops captured a number of rifles, camels, and cattle."

Finally, on the 10th, an engagement occurred, which ordinarily would be considered little more than a skirmish, but which was called the Battle of Birti or Kirbekan, and is thus related by General Brackenbury, who took command after Earle's death.

"CAMP OPPOSITE DALKA ISLAND, Feb. 10th.—Having found the enemy in position stated in telegram of 9th inst., General Earle concentrated Staffords and Black Watch here yesterday, reconnoitred the position, and this morning advanced to attack it. Enemy held a high ridge of razor-backed hills, and some advanced koppies in front, close to the river. Two companies Stafford and two guns being left under Col. Aldeyne to hold the enemy in front, we marched six companies Black Watch and six companies Stafford around the high range of hills, entirely turning the enemy's position, which we attacked from the rear. The enemy's numbers were not great, but their position was extremely strong and difficult of access, and they fought with most determined bravery.



"The Black Watch advanced over rocks and broken ground upon the koppies, and after having by their fire, in the coolest manner, driven off a rush of the enemy, stormed the position under a heavy fire. General Earle was among the foremost in the attack, and, to the deep sorrow of every officer and man in the force, was killed on the summit of the koppie. The Staffords attacked the high ridge over the most difficult ground it was possible for troops to advance upon, and carried the position. In this attack their gallant commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Eyre, was killed. Meanwhile, the squadron of the 19th Hussars, under Colonel Butler, swept round to the rear, and captured the enemy's camp. Our success is complete, and the whole position is in our hands. It is difficult to estimate the enemy's loss, but their dead are lying thick among the rocks and in the open, where, when they found themselves surrounded, they tried to rush through our troops. Scarcely any can have escaped.

"Our advance by river will be continued to-morrow at daylight, and I shall endeavor to carry out your instructions to General Earle, with which I am acquainted."

A dispatch from Kirbeka says :

"A visit to the scene of Tuesday's battle shows that the enemy's position was strongly fortified and carefully protected by screens of stones and rocks. The South Stafford Regiment was only able to capture the high ridge by climbing on their hands and feet. The ridge is about four hundred feet high."

"LONDON, Feb. 11, 1885.—The following are additional particulars of General Earle's battle on Tuesday : After the British forces had succeeded in completely surrounding the enemy's position on Tuesday morning, General Earle commanded the Black Watch regiment to carry the enemy's works at the point of the bayonet. The regiment responded gallantly to his command. The pipers struck up, and with inspiring cheers the men moved forward with a steadiness and valor which the enemy were unable to withstand, and which called forth expressions of admiration from the lips of General Earle. From loopholes in the enemy's works rifle puffs shot out continuously, but the Black Watch kept bravely advancing. They scaled the difficult rocks which lay in their path, and drove the rebels from their shelter at the point of the bayonet. Unhappily General Earle fell at this point as he was gallantly leading his troops to victory.\*

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\* When hardly anything else is to be obtained but dry official accounts, it is somewhat refreshing to find a scrap of individual narrative. The following is taken from a letter of a private soldier to his mother—published in the *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1885. It illustrates the difference between *official* and *actual* history.

"I read with some interest the account of our little, though important, battle of Kerbeka. I see also that, as usual, through all our three campaigns, the poor public-forgotten 19th Hussars has no mention, excepting that it captured the enemy's camp before their position was taken, with twenty banners, of which twenty I am the possessor of one. The account of General Earle's death is somewhat exaggerated. The real thing is this. After the whole of the position was taken, Earle went up the rocks to inspect a small hut (mud) in which some rebels

" Meantime the cavalry pushed beyond this scene of conflict and captured the enemy's camp, three miles to the rear of their intrenched position. This manœuvre was accomplished before the Black Watch had succeeded in carrying the main position.

" While the main attack was being delivered, two companies of the South Staffordshire regiment were directed to seize a high rocky hill which the Arab riflemen were stoutly defending. The British sprang boldly to the charge, but the enemy clung desperately to their position and disputed the ground inch by inch. But the men of Staffordshire were not to be denied, and they finally drove the enemy from the hill. This brought the battle of El Kirbekan to a close. From first to last it was gallantly contested.

" The enemy consisted of Arabs of the Monassir and Robatat tribes. With them were numbers of dervishes from Berber. It is impossible to judge of the number of the enemy, owing to their extended position and the rocky nature of the ground. The corpses of the Arabs who were slain lie in heaps upon the ridges from which they were driven by the British charge. The leader of the foe, who was from Berber, and several emirs were among the killed. The number of fugitives who escaped from the field of battle was very small."

On Wednesday the cavalry, half of the Cornwall regiment, and the Egyptian camel corps advanced three miles and occupied a strong position pending the arrival of the remainder of the column.

were suspected to be secreted. He was warned not to do so, but he poked his head in at the hole used for a window, put it out again, and beckoned to some one below. Again he put his head in at the fatal window, and as he withdrew it and looked around again, the muzzle of a rifle was placed close to the back of the General's head, and the vagabond inside blew his brains out, the charge coming out of the front of his helmet; the fellow then threw the rifle at him. The man was brought out of the house by Major Slade, of the Intelligence Department, and was instantly cut into a hundred pieces. There was another house found with a horse and camel, and inside were twenty-six men and their store of ammunition, and the whole lot were burnt alive in the house, and blown to atoms by the continuous exploding ammunition; the horse and camel were also burnt to a cinder; so that really, you see, the General met with his death through inadvertence. He was a brave man, and deserves all credit. When our column marched out on that eventful Pancake Day, we Hussars scouted away in front of all; next came the poor General leading the infantry, amongst whom was Colonel Eyre, of the Staffordshire Regiment, notable in that he rose from the ranks; and when the General gave the order to charge the enemy, Eyre was the first up the hill, and turning round he shouted, 'Come on, you men of Staffordshire; I'll take this point or die in the attempt'; upon which the men rushed up the hill and took it gallantly, and bayoneted every Arab in it; but the brave old Colonel was shot down.

W. H. SAUNDERS, G Troop, 19th Hussars.

It would appear that General Wolseley had not yet opened his eyes to the impossibility of continuing the campaign, for on the 13th of February he telegraphed the Khedive that he believes "there will be no more fighting along the Nile until General Brackenbury *reaches Berber* with the late General Earle's force."

If he had ever reached Berber he would have found himself out of range of all help, surrounded on all sides, and with no other alternatives but to die in battle or by famine. It is absolutely inconceivable that Wolseley could have thought for a moment of letting him advance farther when he knew that Sir Redvers Buller was preparing to retreat, and all the steamers were lost. That he was so slow in coming to a just estimate of the hazardous position of his two detached columns speaks ill for his generalship. His only excuse is perhaps the wild dispatches from London bidding him capture Berber at any cost, and at the same time giving him *cart blanche* as to future operations. In the meantime, Brackenbury, having advanced but a short distance above Kirbekan under continually increasing difficulties, crossed his entire force to the east bank of the Nile on the 25th of February, and had hardly done so when he received orders to fall back at once upon Korti, where the entire army was finally re-concentrated on the 9th of March. But Wolseley's position was still one of the greatest peril, according to all the rules of probability. Judging from the ability and the wonderful energy the Mahdi had displayed before, it was to be supposed that after the capture of Khartoum he would hurl his entire force against the British, and that the Bedouin tribes occupying the deserts for five hundred miles in their rear

on each side of the Nile would rise *en masse* to cut off their retreat, inflamed by religious enthusiasm as well as by the knowledge that the rich spoils of the British army would be theirs in case of success.\* If these Bedouins had combined together, there could have been no escape for Wolseley. His only base of supplies was Cairo, from which he was separated by twelve hundred miles of desert. True, the Nile was there, but falling more and more every day for four months to come. Then the fearful heat was even now coming, the terrible Khamseen, which no Europeans could withstand if compelled to keep moving without shelter. No supplies or reinforcements could possibly reach him in less than three months, if ever at all. If the Bedouins, avoiding battle, had kept the British at the centre of a movable circle of twenty or thirty miles in diameter, removing and destroying all supplies within their reach, complete destruction must have been their fate.

But with barbarians every thing goes by impulse, and in the East it is always the improbable—almost the impossible—which happens. Dissensions arose in the Mahdi's ranks immediately after the capture of Khartoum. Part of his soldiers scattered to take their booty home. The Baggaras, his first proselytes, dissatisfied at the small amount of plunder found in Khartoum, deserted him and joined a rival prophet, named Muley Hassan Ali, who arose in Kordofan, claiming to be the true Mahdi. He defeated Mohammed Achmet's troops and entered El Obeïd in triumph, mounted upon a white horse and bearing a naked sword, given to him by the prophet Mo-

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\* The Ababdehs and Bishareens are the sole occupants of the Eastern Desert as far down the Nile as Edfou (See map).



hammed himself to slay the false Mahdi. The magnificent success which should have placed Mohammed Achmet on the highest pinnacle of power was, in fact, the beginning of his decadence. After being killed some ten or twelve times by the journals, he finally died of small-pox in July, leaving his prophet's mantle to another Mahdi, who was soon after assassinated by his own followers.

To these peculiarly Oriental circumstances Wolseley, "the lucky," owed his escape from the trap into which he had ventured. On the 23d of March he ordered the evacuation of Korti, alleging with much truth the fatal effects of the climate. Typhoid fever, dysentery, and sun-strokes were increasing among the troops, even before the advent of the dreaded Khamseen. The army fell back to Dongola—thence to the second cataract, where Sir Redvers Buller was left with two brigades; the rest went back to Lower Egypt, while Lord Wolseley himself returned to England in May, to be loaded with rewards and honors for having made one of the most egregious failures on record, for it was not due to any defeats in battle, but solely to vacillation and delay.

The last act in the drama is Gen. Graham's second campaign at Suakim. Why it should ever have been undertaken nearly two months after Gordon's death and when Wolseley's force was already in full retreat, it is difficult to explain. But what could be expected from a government that had never known its own purpose for a month ahead? It had refused aid in the Soudan when it was easy and opportune, and afterwards sent an army when it was too late; it had proclaimed peace at Khar-toum, and at the same time slaughtered 6,000 Bedouins

at Suakim to prove its peaceful intentions; it had invited Turkish intervention and then forbidden it even at the cannon's mouth; it had sought Abyssinia's help and alliance and refused to pay the price she asked, though not one tenth of what was afterwards spent in failure; and now, when really the war had no longer a *raison d'être*, a fresh campaign was inaugurated for no other purpose than vengeance. To restore England's prestige and avenge Gordon's death, Khartoum must be captured and "the Mahdi must be smashed!" And to do this, the Suakim-Berber route was once more selected, without any consideration of last year's experience.

My opinion might be considered by some as tinged with American prejudice, but the British journals abound with much more severe denunciations. Here is the judgment of Sir A. H. Layard, formerly Minister to Constantinople, and of world-wide celebrity, from his letter to the *Times*, dated Feb. 14th.

"It is scarcely necessary for me to refer to what I consider the unnecessary, and consequently wicked, bombardment of Alexandria, and the short but bloody campaign on the Nile; the shocking and useless slaughter of the Arabs near Suakim, with whom we had no cause of quarrel; and the hopeless mission of the heroic Gordon, and his desertion and death. These events, and the most culpable vacillation and delays on the part of the government, have led to the expedition to Khartoum in which we are now engaged, which has already cost us the lives of many brave men, and will cost us the lives of many more, whom England, in these critical times, can ill spare.

"Why are we going to Khartoum? No one, it seems, can answer the question. And yet the soil of the Soudan is reeking with the blood of our soldiers and with that of the wretched Arabs, whom we are pleased to call 'rebels.' Why 'rebels'? They are not our subjects, and have done us no wrong. Gordon, betrayed by his own government, has fallen in a war brought on by ourselves while holding a fortified place to which we had no right. Hitherto England has not been wont to avenge the death of her heroes by the wholesale massacre of brave men.

"I have only glanced at a few of the blunders—and worse than blunders—committed by the government. But it is useless to recur to the past. What is to be done in the future? We must now of necessity, and at any sacrifice, take Khar-

toum, not to avenge the death of Gordon, but to restore our prestige and credit, which the incapacity of the Ministry has so seriously compromised. To retreat would be to make Eastern races believe that we had been defeated and driven back by the undisciplined hordes of the Mahdi—a belief that might be productive to us of the most serious consequences. We cannot retain Khartoum permanently; we cannot allow any European Power to possess it. Nor can we abandon it to the wild tribes of the Soudan. To do so would be to expose those who have befriended us to massacre, to endanger Egypt proper, to re-open the slave trade on a vast scale, and to destroy our commerce in those regions. It appears to me, therefore, that we have only one course to pursue—to allow the Sultan, who is the legitimate owner of the Soudan, to occupy it. We cannot consistently with our reputation and dignity ask his aid to take Khartoum; but when we have established ourselves there, and made the so-called ‘rebels’ feel our power, surely there would be no loss of either if we handed over the country to those who have a right to it. It would, indeed, be well worth our while to assist the Sultan to occupy it by helping him with our transports and by forwarding his troops inland. It would, in the end, be a considerable saving of blood and money were we to do so.

“But, it will be objected, Turkish rule is bad and corrupt. At any rate, it would be better than the anarchy which would prevail in the Soudan after we had abandoned it; for there are no native elements out of which a strong and stable government could be formed. We could take measures to restrain any abuse of power on the part of the Turkish authorities—by keeping, for instance, at their side a capable and energetic man in some such capacity as our Commissioner. In the hands of the Mahdi, or of any one likely to succeed him, Khartoum would again become a centre of the slave-trade. With Turkey we could combine for its complete suppression.”

Sir Henry Layard’s plan, as marked out in this letter, might be liable to objection; but it had at least the merit of a definite object in view.

Between the 10th and 15th of March, Gen. Graham’s force of about 5,000 of the *élite* of the British army, comprising, among other regiments, the Coldstream and Grenadier Guards, the Royal Artillery, the 5th and 17th (Irish) Lancers, landed at Suakim and repeated the performance of the preceding year with much greater loss and less success. The movements were so similar that it becomes tedious to describe them in detail. The first step was always to establish zeribas and water-depots before moving a few miles from Suakim; then having a

brush with the enemy and—going back. On the 20th of March an engagement took place at Hasheen which nearly resulted in disaster, as is shown by the following account:

“The Arabs displayed desperate bravery. The marines drove them from the hills and forced them to retire to the plains. Then the Indian troops charged upon the Arab position, but were outflanked, and an unsuspected body of Arabs succeeded in getting behind their line. The Indians (Bengal cavalry) found themselves between two fires and they fled. During this retreat they were closely pressed by the Arabs, who hamstringed the horses and speared the riders. The Bengalese fell back in confusion upon the English infantry and guards, who had been formed in a hollow square, and the square leisurely retired while the Arabs were yelling that they had regained their lost position. At this juncture the artillery came to the rescue, and a brisk fire of small-shot from the machine-guns and shells from the Krupp field-mortars drove the Arabs from their position. The marines maintained a steady firing throughout the engagement.

“The honors of the day are probably due to the Irish Lancers, who changed the tide of battle by a desperate charge and retrieved the fortunes of Gen. Graham’s command when they seemed almost hopeless. The British troops have returned to their former camp, near Suakim.”

On the 22d another and more serious conflict occurred upon the same ground, which is thus described:

“SUAKIM, March 22d.—While detachments of English and Indian infantry were making a zeriba seven miles southwest of Suakim to-day they were suddenly surprised by a rush of Arabs who had been massed and concealed in the defiles west of Hasheen.

“The English formed a square as quickly as possible, but the camels, mules, and horses were driven back in confusion on the troops, causing a stampede, and amid clouds of dust the Arabs penetrated the south and north sides of the square. Meanwhile the marines and Berkshire Regiment, who were on the east and west sides of the square, maintained a continuous fire, holding the enemy at bay, while a charge of the cavalry and the fire from the guns at the Hasheen zeriba checked the onslaught of the Arabs, which at first threatened a serious disaster to the British.”

“March 23d.—Nearly all the casualties were due to spear thrusts received in hand-to-hand engagements. The Arabs got between the transport train and zeriba, speared the men of the transport corps, and killed the animals. They fought savagely, refusing to give or take quarter.

“Gen. McNeil, who was commanding the zeriba, reports vaguely that there were several thousand rebels in the fight, and that over one thousand were killed or wounded. Gen. McNeil is blamed for not taking precautions against a surprise.



"The damage done to transport materials yesterday is immense. The guards and artillery were sent to reinforce the troops who were attacked. The whole British force remained in the field during the night.

"The camels and mules were hamstrung by the Arabs. Scores of camp-followers were cut up. Arabs scattered about in the whole vicinity intercepting native fugitives. The appearance and yells of the Arabs were so sudden that the whole assemblage of transport animals, mixed with natives, became panic-stricken and surged on the zeriba, making resistance hopeless. The scene was indescribable. Arabs glided and crept in all directions among the animals. The Haddowas swarmed from the bush like magic and attacked the zeriba fiercely on all sides. The Soudanese coolies were mistaken for enemies, and many were killed by friends.

"The enemy began an attack at 3 o'clock this morning. They were repulsed, and the ground was cleared by 4."

"LONDON, March 23d.—Gen. Graham telegraphs from the advanced zeriba that the British position there is strong and secure against any number of the enemy. He regrets the serious British losses in yesterday's fight, but exonerates Gen. McNeil from blame, believing he did the best that could be done under the circumstances. Gen. Graham praises the gallantry of all the troops. He says the cavalry would have given the alarm had not the rugged nature of the ground prevented their seeing more than a short distance. Though the rebels met with a temporary success, they learned a severe lesson. The corpses of over 1,000 Arabs have been counted on the field of yesterday's battle, including the bodies of many noted chiefs."

"LONDON, March 24th.—The *Standard's* Suakim dispatch says the British killed in the engagement of Sunday were seven officers and sixty-three men. Many bodies of boys and women were found on the battle-field."

In this fight the total loss on the British side, including friendly Arabs, was greater than ever before, being 580 killed and wounded and 1,000 camels.

This engagement was followed by the inevitable return to Suakim. Though the British advanced zeriba was secure, as General Graham said, against any number of the enemy, it was a physical impossibility to hold it, for the labor of keeping a water-train constantly going over these seven miles, protected by troops every step of the way as it must be, would have speedily worn out the whole army. How much security or tranquillity the British enjoyed in their lines around Suakim is vividly

described in the following Soudan correspondence of the *London Telegraph*.

"How the Hadendowas do it nobody but they themselves can tell, but night after night they come into the middle of our camp, stab and hack a few soldiers, and go out again scathless. Sometimes they creep in five abreast past our sentinels; sometimes they come right up to our tents, half a mile within the line of redoubts and pickets, and bring camels and horses with them. But, whatever the audacity of their entrance, the impunity of their departure is the same. Our guards turn out, bugles sound the alarm, signals flash, rifles are let off, a gun-boat fires overhead into black space, but next morning there are only our own mutilated and dead in evidence of the assassins' presence. The Hadendowas have left none behind them, or had none to leave. It is horrible in the highest degree, this monotony of midnight murder, and depressing beyond language to find our head-quarters' staff apparently so unteachable by experience.

"Crawling along on all fours, they traverse the space between them and their victims with all the patient caution of wild beasts stalking prey. They reach the doomed tent. For the sake of the sea breeze the doorway is open, and the next instant the murderer is standing by the sleeping soldier's side. He feels a hand passing over his body and starts. A cry is rising to his lips. It is strangled in his throat by a groan of pain, and before the gallant fellow can even warn his comrades the fierce spear is driven home through his body, the heavy two-handed sword has fallen across him. But the tent is alarmed. There is no time to lose! Slashing this way and that, the murderers stab and hack with the fury of fiends, and then as the camp starts to its feet in clamor they are off. Not a sound betrays their passing. There is no trace of blood to tell of retribution. They are gone—back into the villainous gullies, back into the scattered brush, and next we can imagine them sitting to refresh themselves outside our line of redoubts—to listen gleefully to the storm they have raised—the bugles telling the old tale of murder completed and the murderers gone, the aimless volley of rifles, the din of voices, the impotent utterances of our indignant guns roaring for an impossible vengeance. They hear the tempest of the camp's alarm swell up and dwindle away, and then quietly get up and pass on to where their friends are waiting to congratulate and to rejoice—to rub their spear-heads against the red tips of the assassin's weapons, to smear their swords with the blood still wet on their blades. And in our camp? The hospital stretchers there are carrying away the mangled, mutilated bodies of our men, their comrades standing to their arms, savage with useless rage, as they look at the lantern-lit group of surgeons and wounded. It is a horrible episode, yet of nightly occurrence.

"'Murder! Murder!' I heard the word ring out last night from the ordnance camp and then came a cry—the bitter cry of a man suddenly overtaken by the agony of death. A shot and then another and another. Then a confusion of muffled sounds. Then silence. I was only 400 yards away. The night had been so still that the water lapping on the quay was plainly audible where I lay. Presently came this brief uproar of alarm, subsiding as suddenly as it had arisen.

Signals were flashing overhead. A party of Hadendowas had either crept straight across the camp, or passing along the rear, had traversed its complete length, crossing twice on their way the electric light thrown by the Dolphin, had reached, without being observed, the farthest batch of tents from their starting-point, the nearest to the town. Behind them, only a hundred yards off, was Quarantine island, with its camp; nearer still lay our shipping, with the gun-boats close in shore, commanding one line of their retreat, the whole of the British troops intercepting the other. Behind them was the sea; on their left the town, yet, such is the confidence inspired by nightly success and impunity, that the assassins did not hesitate to creep even into such a desperate position as this. And their work was desperate and terribly complete. Of the whole of the occupants of the tents—24 in all—only two escaped their spears and swords, while the murderers retreated apparently unharmed. As they went back rifles were wildly emptied after them, and the Carysfort fired volleys into the dark. But there was no trace of blood. Inside the tents the sight was dreadful—blood everywhere, and men lying about in all directions wounded and groaning.”

On the 28th of March, General Graham having constructed more zeribas and established additional water-depots, moved again to the position occupied by General McNeil on the 22d. In two weeks he had approached only two miles nearer to Tamai, the old battle-ground of last year. The heat was growing fearful, sunstrokes and fever cases multiplying greatly. Finally, on the 2d of April, he advanced to Tamai, and found it evacuated. After resting and watering his troops, he burned Osman-Digma's camp, as he had done last year, and returned to Suakin on the 4th. The wily Bedouin was learning lessons in war; he had ordered his followers to avoid a regular battle, and to draw the British after them into the hills. At this time Graham was instructed to open negotiations with Osman-Digma, which the latter refused to entertain.

It must be stated here that, in connection with Graham's expedition, a second attempt was made to construct a railroad. The London *Engineering* contained the following information:

"The military authorities have at length made up their minds, and a standard gauge railway is to be laid from the Red Sea to the Nile. The construction of the line does not appear to offer any obstacles which railway engineers are not in the habit of contending with. There are said to be eleven groups of wells in the total distance, but many of these would be utterly inefficient for engineering work.

"The military authorities have, however, determined to be independent of such chances, and have made a contract, according to which a four-inch pipe is to be laid along the whole route.

"H. G. H. Tarr, of Yonkers, N. Y., has been offered the contract of laying the three hundred miles of pipe across the desert to supply water to the English soldiers in the Soudan. He has not decided whether he will accept the contract.

"The pumps are to be supplied by the H. R. Worthington Hydraulic Works, of New York, who have achieved such a signal success in the pumping of petroleum through long distances in America. There are to be six double pumps, with steam cylinders eighteen inch in diameter by eighteen-inch stroke.

"The Admiralty has been directed to find the necessary vessels for transporting the plant to the spot, and shipments were to have been made, it was said, this week, both from Hull and London. Each vessel will take a complete equipment for the construction and working of five miles of the line, so that should any mishap occur to one vessel, the whole work will not be detained for want of some vital feature. The list made out includes a locomotive and ballast trucks and trollies, one crane, two crabs, pumps, steam boilers, permanent way complete, electric light plant, and all other necessary appliances, including fifteen thousand sleepers, etc., etc.

"As for the time that will be taken in the construction of the line, it is very difficult to make a forecast with any pretence to accuracy at present. The great important and uncertain factor at present is the question of *native labor*. If that can be obtained easily on the spot, a great part of the difficulty will be overcome. In any case, the first instalment of plant cannot be landed at Suakim much under a month, and it will doubtless be well into May before the whole of the appliances are on the ground. It is evident, therefore, that this proposed line can have little influence on the present military situation on the Nile."—*Engineering*, Feb. 20, 1885.

*The Illustrated London News* added:

"It has now been decided also to lay down the long-talked-of railway to Berber. The route chosen will be about two hundred and seventy miles in length, and will run over the best water district, there being, however, a perfectly arid stretch of fifty miles. The work will be carried on by Messrs. Lucas & Aird, who have informed the Government that the first thirty-five miles of railway gear has already been arranged for, and will be ready for shipment this week. If all goes well, the railway will be constructed in four or five months."

The *London Times* of Feb. 20th made the following prophecies. [The italics are my own.]



"Arrangements have already been made by Messrs. Lucas & Aird for the co-operation of natives, and workmen from other parts will also co-operate with the men now sent out immediately on their arrival. Thus, the public may rely on the fact that there will be no hindrance or delay in pushing the road to the front.

"The reports point to a fight in the neighborhood of Tamaï or Tamanieb, *and this will be followed up by a rapid advance to Sinkat*, where it may possibly be desirable to garrison for a time. Sinkat is comparatively cool, and would form a healthy summer station, the occupation of which would probably paralyze the action of the tribes, and enable the railway pioneer force to advance along the northern route unopposed. It has generally been believed that the movement of a small force to Berber would have been possible after General Graham's victories last year, and this is still more likely to be the case now, *when, after defeat, the Arabs will be at once followed up to their stronghold*. The probability seems to be, therefore, that after one battle the military situation in this portion of the theatre of war will clear itself; while there can be little doubt that the final suppression of Osman Digma will produce a moral effect at Khartoum."

The "*Thunderer*" was certainly most unfortunate in its predictions when assuring the public of *the fact* that there would be "no hindrance or delay in pushing the road to the front." It failed to take into account the rather serious objections the Bedouins made to its construction. Its surmise that a fight at Tamaï or Tamanieb would be "followed by a rapid advance to Sinkat" was equally unlucky, and all its prophecies were completely falsified by events.

But, in my opinion, the most absurd idea of all, considering the localities and circumstances, was that of constructing a line of pipe to convey water from Suakin to Berber. The credit (?) of originating it was claimed by one of the New York dailies. Now, although an American editor is expected to know *everything*—and a good deal more,—he may be excused for being unfamiliar with the peculiar difficulties of the Soudan deserts. Some months before, another New York daily had given its readers a highly imaginative and fictitious description of the shady groves, smiling oases, enlivened by the warbling of birds, and the purling streams to be found on the Sua-

kin-Berber route! But that the British military authorities, who *ought to have known*, and had no possible excuse for not knowing, the nature of the country and the obstacles in the way, should have at once jumped at the idea and proceeded to make contracts for carrying it out, is really inconceivable. I hope Messrs. Worthington & Tarr were given the contracts, and made a good thing by them. They were not responsible for the imbecility of the scheme. It seems to have been imagined that there was nothing to do but to lay the pipe down and cover it with sand, for the paper said:

“It has been settled that the pipe is to be laid in zig-zag lines to allow for expansion and contraction under the sand. The laying of the pipe, if a sufficient force of men is put to work, ought to proceed at the rate of about twenty miles a day. [Twice as fast as an army could march!] An American gentleman conversant with all the details of the oil pipe-line system, now in London, is in consultation with the British Government, and there seems to be a disposition to expedite the work.

“It will, of course, be necessary to have a guard at every pumping-station on the route. These stations will also be stopping-places for the railroad trains.”

There were to be engines every twenty-five or thirty miles, and water was to be supplied at the rate of one hundred and fifty gallons a minute, or over two hundred thousand gallons per day, which would have to be obtained chiefly from the condensers at Suakim! And what would the Bedouins be doing all the while?

All this shows the absurdity of trying from the “Horse Guards” in London to direct operations in a country thousands of miles away, and about which the Commander-in-chief and his advisers evidently knew nothing. It also illustrates the folly of supposing that the same means will accomplish the same results in regions differing so entirely and absolutely in every re-

spect as Pennsylvania and the Soudan. It was assumed that because a pipe-line had been highly successful in conveying oil hundreds of miles in America, it would be equally available for conveying water in the desert. But in America supplies of all kinds, transportation, water, fuel, timber, workshops, machinery, willing and intelligent labor, are to be had in abundance far exceeding the demand; and in addition, perfect peace and the full protection, not only of the law but of the entire community, ensuring the swift punishment of any trespasser daring to tamper with the line. In the Soudan, on the contrary, no supplies, no water, no timber, not even a practicable road. Every stick of timber, every railroad tie, every pound of coal, to be brought from abroad. Not only no native labor to be had, but every Bedouin bending all his energies to prevent the construction of the line, and to cut it in a hundred places every night if it were ever built!

Now, let it not be supposed that I claim credit for extraordinary acumen or prophetic foresight for asserting before the railway was shipped and Graham sailed that the former would never be built and that the British would never advance twenty miles from Suakim. My predictions were based upon my *knowledge* of the country, and I would have confessed myself an idiot if I could not have formed a correct judgment. But the point I make here against the British military authorities is, that this same knowledge had been perfectly accessible to them for six years at least, and that there was no excuse for their not mastering it, or for not drawing correct conclusions from it. In my letter to the *New York World*, published March 1, 1885, I used the following language:

" My knowledge and experience of engineering must be behind the times, for I confess I cannot conceive of any patent-lightning process by which a railroad can be built in a few weeks across a lofty chain of mountains, eighty miles broad, and then one hundred and sixty miles farther, when not even a line has ever been surveyed, and when the only trail goes up and down grades so steep that camel-riding is often un-safe. Think of the grading, blasting, tunnelling, etc., that must be done before the track can be laid—in a country where even wooden ties must be brought from abroad ; for all the stunted mimosas between Suakim and Berber could not yield ties enough for ten miles. And who is to build this railroad under this tropical African sun ? Nothing has been said about bringing laborers to do the work. I fancy the job is not attractive, and even for high pay it will not be easy to obtain them. Are the soldiers to build the railway ? They would have quite enough to do to protect the laborers from the attacks of the Bedouins, unless we suppose the latter to fold up their hands and look on meekly while the road was building. And if the road were built, how many regiments would have to be echeloned along the line to keep it from being cut at a hundred points ? The idea seems too absurd for serious contemplation, and yet some British officers who could see from Suakim the majestic chain lifting its lofty crests less than fifteen miles away, asserted six weeks ago that a narrow-gauge road could be laid as fast as the troops can march ! But the project was soon abandoned, as it will be again beyond a doubt.

" General Graham may once more land his troops at Suakim, but mark my words, the Coldstream and Grenadier Guards who have just left London will never march to Berber."

Referring to the pipe-line scheme, which had just been published, I added :

" The scheme is so idiotic that it must be a *canard*. How could it be possible to procure distilled water enough for an army and its animals in the first place ? But if enough could be produced, how could the pipes be laid across the mountains and plains for two hundred and fifty miles ? [with the enemy all around]. If laid, how could they be protected from being cut ? . . . Moses himself in the Sinai desert never attempted such a miracle ! "

How the plan worked is shown by the following press dispatch :

" April 25, 1885.—The building of the Berber Railway has been suspended outside of Suakim, owing to the inability of the army to afford protection to the line beyond the camp. It has been decided that the forces necessary for such protection cannot be spared."

Not only so, but nightly attacks were made upon the British outposts, in which the Bedouins often succeeded



in burning quantities of the wooden sleepers and other material brought from England at great expense. Only a few miles were laid, to be quickly torn up by the enemy. Three months later the steamers, which had never even unloaded the material, took it back to England, and that was the last heard of the railway and the pipe-line. General Graham was a distinguished engineer officer, that being his special arm of the service; he had a splendid record,\* and he and Herbert Stewart did the most and the best fighting in the Soudan. He understood perfectly that a railway to Berber can never be built while hostile Bedouins hold the deserts, and in all the accounts of the war, I have not seen a single word to show that he ever advocated the undertaking.

The burning of Osman-Digma's camp was the last episode of the campaign. On the 7th of May, Lord Wolseley came from Cairo to Suakim by sea to review Graham's army and compliment it on its achievements. After this the two generals and all the troops re-embarked, leaving a garrison of one thousand two hundred marines at Suakim, who from that time forth were closely besieged in their lines, protected by gun-boats. It was officially reported the following August, that of that number only one hundred were fit for duty in consequence of the terrible effects of the climate.

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\* "General Graham entered the British army as an ensign in the Royal Engineers, in 1850. He served through the Crimean war with that body, receiving promotion for his gallantry and gaining the highly-prized Victoria Cross for heading a party in an assault by ladders at the Redan. Twice during the Crimean war he was wounded. In the Chinese war General Graham also distinguished himself, taking part in the assault of Tangku and the Taku forts, and also in the capture of Peking. His promotion was gained step by step, until, in 1881, his present rank was reached. In the campaign against Arabi, in 1882, General Graham commanded the Second brigade, and won new honors."

The condition in which the country and the people were left by the British evacuation is well described by the war correspondent of the *London Graphic*, in a letter dated May 30, 1885, as follows :

“ The withdrawal of British troops from the Soudan goes on rapidly, alike on the Nile and at Suakim. Dreading the arrival of the Mahdists on the departure of the British from Dongola, the majority of the population are fleeing north, and the authorities are obliged to provide shelter and food for the refugees at Wady Halfa, while trying to induce some neighboring powerful sheikh to take the government of the district. The Mahdi, however, has retired up the White Nile to Jebel Ellini, and announces that he will not advance on the Dongola district till after next Ramadan. Indeed, he is thought to have little chance of doing so, as his influence is weakened by the growing power of his rival the anti-Mahdi, Sidi Muley Achmed. One by one the positions beyond Suakim, which have been so carefully fortified by the British, are being abandoned. Otao and Handoub, on the road to Berber, have been evacuated ; and though the railway is still protected by the frequent running of an armored train, the Arabs tear up the rails, and indulge in small skirmishes whenever possible. It is evident already that the tribes are flocking back to Osman Digma, even many of the friendlies, taking with them the British weapons they have received. Suakim itself is in a state of perpetual confusion, with troops continually embarking, the harbor filled with transports bearing the now useless railway stock, and sickness and depression prevailing amongst the soldiers. The heat seriously affects Indian as well as British regiments, and over 1,100 have been invalided within the last two months. Airy huts, with thatched roofs, are being constructed for the men. Lord Wolseley has gone back to Cairo, handing over the command of the Nile force to General Dormer, and preparations are being made both at Cairo and Alexandria for the temporary accommodation of the British troops. The Guards have at last been disembarked at Alexandria, and this proceeding raises anew fresh comments as to the change of plans, none of which are over-complimentary to England and her vacillation. Egypt looks anxiously for the reply to the British note, inviting Turkey to occupy Suakim and other Red Sea ports. If Turkey refuses, the note states that England must arrange for some civilized Power to occupy the positions, while, as soon as order and a stable government are secured, the English troops will be withdrawn from Egypt.”

Meanwhile the probabilities of war with Russia about the Afghanistan question diverted public attention, and the Soudan almost passed out of mind. The Soudanese, however, have persistently continued their advance. Dongola fell into their hands, and in December they became so threatening that Sir Redvers Buller, then

commanding at the second cataract, found it necessary to drive them back. He advanced from Wady Halfa, and on the 30th of December, 1885, he met the enemy at Ghinnis. The usual result occurred. There was a skirmish, a few volleys fired, and the Bedouins, after leaving two hundred or three hundred killed and wounded on the field, retreated, to advance again as soon as the British retired to their former positions. Lord Rosebery, Foreign Secretary, subsequently instructed Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, the British Commissioner in Egypt, to withdraw the British troops from Wady Halfa. So that the whole of Nubia, as well as the entire Soudan, is abandoned to the horrors of anarchy and brigandage. It was found impossible, however, to withdraw the British from the first cataract without exposing Egypt herself to the danger of invasion. A few regiments are still at Assouan (1886), and their condition may be inferred from these extracts from letters published in the London journals.\*

"While men's minds are wholly occupied with the Irish question at home, our troubles abroad are certainly not decreasing. In Egypt and Burmah the flower of the British army are being sacrificed.

"Our best troops are silently perishing by disease on the banks of the Nile. Our bravest officers, with the courage of their race, are sacrificing their lives, one after the other, in the vain attempt to remedy one continued series of mistakes, which commenced with our occupation of the country, and seem unending. In each instance of wanton and uncalled-for interference with foreign nations we have failed ignominiously. We went to Egypt avowedly to put an end to Arabi's rebellion, and to restore peace to the country. We have succeeded in maintaining just as much order as the presence of the British troops inspires; we have, indirectly, lost Egypt the Soudan; we have covered the desert with the bones of brave Englishmen and Arabs in our vain attempts to force back into subjection a province we had neither the wisdom to keep for Egypt nor the energy to reconquer; we sacrificed Gordon at Khartoum to the indecision and vacillation of a government which sent him there in a moment of panic, and kept him there a lingering martyr

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\* The printing of this paper having been delayed by various causes, I have added for the sake of completeness a few references to later events.

to its shameful violation of its promises of support. And now a second time we are playing the same miserable part in Burmah.

"How much longer are our troops to remain in Egypt? The reports from Assouan are most pitiable. The Dorset, Berks, and Durham regiments have each lost about four hundred men, half their strength, from enteric fever or from sun-stroke. Five or six hours after the moment of attack suffices to carry them off. In the last month there were fifty-two deaths, and one man reports that the day before he left Assouan for Cairo eight men were lying dead in the mortuary, and five others were being buried. With the thermometer  $126^{\circ}$  in the shade, it is no wonder that our men die like fleas. Thus, four years after the first fatal step, English soldiers are still being sacrificed by hundreds in that terrible Nile valley."

The troops at Suakim are suffering quite as much.

A correspondent of the *London Standard* writes:

"I cannot help wishing that the people at home knew the exact state of affairs out here. If they could only hear the howls of rage and vows of vengeance when some one reads aloud a statement in the papers from home that 'the climate of Suakim is pleasant,' they might think there were two opinions upon the subject. If being held in a vice of fearful heat is pleasant, Suakim is decidedly so. If men dying of heat apoplexy is a sign of a healthy climate, Suakim may be called salubrious. To live in a place where the temperature never goes below  $96^{\circ}$ , and frequently rises to  $112^{\circ}$  and  $120^{\circ}$ , is to drag out such an existence as none who have not experienced it can possibly imagine. To make matters worse, the epidemic of enteric fever continues unabated, and a melancholy procession to the cemetery may be seen always once, sometimes twice, a day. At the present rate of mortality more than half of the European troops here will be in their last resting-place within a year, and the other half will have been invalidated home two or three times over. What with the smells from want of drainage, the fearful, torturing heat, and the condensed water, which is often putrid, Suakim is about the last place to keep Englishmen in. The Shropshire regiment, which came out over nine hundred strong, is now about seven hundred, and will be less when the next draft of sick men leave. They lost only two killed in a night alarm, and have had a reinforcement from Suez of fifty. Can any thing speak more plainly than this? Last year the Marine Battery, five hundred strong, invalided fifteen hundred men away, which means that it took two thousand men to keep up the regiment to the small strength of five hundred."

And what is there to show for all this fearful waste of treasure, and of what was still more precious—gallant and noble lives? National humiliation resulting from the consciousness of inexcusable failure; loss of national prestige throughout the world; bitter sorrow for the fate



of the hero to whom rescue came too late ; Egypt despoiled of half her territory and crushed under the burden of additional debt ; vast provinces where order reigned before, which were then rapidly opening to humanizing influences, and were connected with the rest of the world by increasing commerce and by telegraph, now so completely beyond the pale of civilization that nothing more is known of what is going on there than of the savages living around the equatorial lakes. These are some of the fruits produced from the evil seed planted on the ill-omened day when England was reluctantly induced to interfere in Egyptian affairs "in order that Shylock might have his pound of flesh." Speaking of that interference at Cooper Institute, in November, 1882, after the arbitrary and impolitic deposition of Ismail-Pasha, and the bombardment of Alexandria I said : " England, has sown iniquity, and she will reap disaster." How she must regret to-day that first fatal move which led step by step, to the final catastrophe ! Sir Samuel Baker, who is so thoroughly familiar with the country and the people, protesting against the abandonment of Khartoum, even before Gordon was sent there to effect its evacuation, uttered these prophetic words in the *Nineteenth Century* for January, 1884 :

"Khartoum is a name that is known among the wildest savages of equatorial Africa who never heard of Paris or of London ; to them it is the centre of all that is great, and it is the capital of every thing. The abandonment of Khartoum would, in their estimation, be the disruption of a central power, which would imply impotence. The slave hunters have been suppressed by the authority from Khartoum, and the force required for that suppression has emanated from that centre of strength and government. If, therefore, Khartoum should be abandoned, the protection that was the support of loyal tribes of the interior would have been withdrawn, the supporting power would have been overthrown, and the slave hunters would again be in the ascendant. The result would be immediate : those tribes which have been

faithful to the government would become the first victims to those who had been against the government. A general anarchy would ensue, and the loyal would be sacrificed to the slave gangs which had been kept in subjection by the imperial forces. The slave-trade would be renewed with tenfold vigor, as no power would remain to curb the atrocities of the traders. This deplorable situation would render impossible all future attempts at government, as the natives would have lost all confidence of support; they would have seen that the loyal had been sacrificed by the abandonment of the government upon which they had depended for protection, while those who had openly defied the laws had triumphed by rebellion. All the good results of the last five and twenty years of exploration and energetic action against the slave-trade would have been entirely dissipated, and the end of the long struggle would have yielded victory to the wrong-doers. The work of sixty-four years, since the conquest of the Soudan by Mehmet-Ali-Pasha, would have been utterly destroyed, and the Soudan would relapse into the frightful barbarism described by Bruce a hundred years ago. It is ridiculous to suppose that any Soudan races are capable of self-government. If we refuse this to Ireland, how can we expect a better result from ignorant barbarians, who would extinguish all progress by a chronic inter-tribal strife? As local autonomy would be impossible should Khartoum be evacuated by the Egyptian forces, the Soudan, deprived of its capital, would resolve into a political chaos, until some superior force should take advantage of the general disruption, and restore order by military conquest."

Dark as this picture is, the reality is probably even worse, for the rumor comes that Khartoum has been razed to the ground, probably in consequence of the struggles for its possession by rival Mahdis and slave-hunting chiefs.

Of the British invasion of the Soudan, no traces will be left, except the bleaching bones of thousands of Bedouins on the banks of the Nile and the shores of the Red Sea, together with revived and redoubled hatred of that form of Christian civilization which could bring no better boon to those distant regions than the slaughter and destruction of a people that had never done England any wrong. In this connection a reflection almost forces itself upon every thinking man. If England had devoted to the education, the material and moral improvement of Ireland one tenth of the millions she has spent in the last thirty

years in unnecessary, if not unjust, wars against weak and uncivilized nations, how much stronger she would be now, and how much better she would deserve the title, which she arrogantly claims, of being the leader of Christian civilization!

I will add only a few words of comment. I have already said enough of the political and military vacillation, as well as the inexcusable and, it might be thought, wilful ignorance of the theatre of war, which precluded the possibility of success. As to strategic ability, none was displayed. Lord Wolseley's separation within reach of the enemy of his small force into three detachments, beyond supporting distance, showed a lack of generalship and common-sense, the consequences of which he escaped, not by any skill on his part, but through fortuitous circumstances, which he had no reason to count upon, and over which he had no control. Bad generalship may by chance escape the due punishment of its blunders, but it is none the less bad for all that.

As to the tactics employed, they were, perhaps, the best under the circumstances and before such an enemy, but military men cannot but wonder why an uncivilized and undisciplined foe, armed almost exclusively with swords and spears, should prove so formidable that an army of select British regiments, supplied with the best breech-loaders and abundantly strengthened with artillery and machine-guns, dared not meet them on the plain without constructing stockades and forming squares. Stranger, still, in three different engagements a square was broken, one being driven back eight hundred yards, and all its guns captured by naked savages *charging on foot*,—a deed which Napoleon's cuirassiers failed to achieve at

Waterloo in the days of slow-firing flint-muskets! A numerical superiority of four or five to one is hardly sufficient to explain this wonder, which must be due to several causes. *First*, the innate bravery of the warlike, indomitable Bedouins, who prize independence above life itself. *Secondly*, the contempt of life frequently found in savage races, perhaps because their existence offers so little to make it desirable; and, *thirdly*, the fanatical faith which inspires Mussulmans with the absolute conviction that from battle against infidels they fly straight to that delicious paradise of verdant groves, cool breezes, and rivers of milk and wine. Nothing could appeal more powerfully to the imagination and senses of a passionate race, whose lives are an incessant struggle against hunger, scorching heat, and thirst. How often in my desert marches have I seen those very same Bedouins,—at that time peaceable camel-drivers and goat-herds, trudging along day after day, half-naked, bare-headed, and bare-footed, upon the blistering sand, with seldom water enough to quench their thirst, living on scanty rations of coarse bread or parched dourah and camel's cheese, and I wondered if they really thought life worth living! For such men battle and death have no terrors. Above the smoke of musketry and the sheen of flashing bayonets, they behold with the eye of faith the cooling spray of Eden's fountains; they see the peerless, black-eyed houris of paradise waving the Prophet's green-silken banners, and opening their arms to welcome the warrior to their embrace, and they rush upon death with the gladness of a lover meeting his bride. It cannot be denied that faith is strongest in ignorant races, and diminishes in proportion to intelligence and civilization. I do not question in the



least the sincerity of the average civilized Christian, but I very much doubt whether there are many who would gladly fly to certain death to gain immediate admission to heaven. They would more probably follow the example of those two chaplains of General Jubal Early's command in the Valley, whom he once met running to the rear at a 2.20 gait. The old soldier, who could swear as hard as he could fight, addressed them in his usual forcible style:

"—— Blankity blank your blank souls! Where the blank are you running to?"

They could hardly gasp out:

"—— General! the Yankees are coming!"

"—— Blankity blank you!" rejoined the irate General; "for forty years you have been wanting to get to heaven, and blank you, now you turn back when within just two minutes of it!"

There is a good deal of human nature in that. We all want to go to heaven some time or other—but not yet awhile!

The criticisms I have made may appear harsh, but they are mildness itself when compared with the denunciations of many of the most eminent English soldiers and civilians, expressed in Parliament and through the press, only a few of which I have quoted. It is an undeniable fact that the Soudan war was one of the most complete military failures of modern times, and that after all her expenditure of blood and treasure, England was forced to retire baffled from the struggle against barbarians. In the words of the *London Times*, of Feb. 13th:

"The Nile expedition, with its immense cost in men and money, represents a dead loss to the nation, a loss directly and wholly due not to the difficulties with which the government had to contend, but to the obstinacy with which they refused to recognize facts plain to all the world, and to assume responsibilities which it was their primary duty to discharge."

But errors of judgment, though lamentable, leave no stain upon British arms ; for valor never shone brighter than when England's young soldiers, most of whom saw war for the first time, braved the terrible African heat and thirst, withstood unflinchingly the assaults of countless hordes of fierce Bedouins on the deserts of the Soudan, and plucked victory from the jaws of destruction.

One of the best traits of the English character is its love of fair play and its appreciation of a plucky foe. This was never better illustrated than in the Soudan war. Every official report, as well as the letters of all the war correspondents, express the most unstinted praise and admiration for the courage and unsurpassed gallantry of the Soudanese. Those veteran officers who had had most experience of war were foremost in their eulogies of the Bedouins' bravery. This generous tribute mitigates in some degree the horrors of war, and, coming from equally brave Englishmen, we may say of it in the words of a gifted poetess :

" . . . accept it thus,  
An homage true they tender,  
As soldiers unto soldiers' worth,  
As brave to brave will render ! "

Unfortunate as were the results of the Soudan war, it was not without its laurels. England will feel a just pride in the prowess of her troops, who showed themselves worthy successors of the soldiers of Plassey and Assaye, of Salamanca and Waterloo, of Inkerman, and a hundred other glorious fields. Herbert Stewart, Burnaby, Earle, Eyre, and many other gallant soldiers, sealed with their blood their devotion to their country. England had

naturally the most cause to regret their loss, but every soldierly heart in every land joined with true sympathy in the feeling of sorrow for their fate ; and perhaps it is no exaggeration to assert that the glory of having produced such a splendid type of modern Christian heroism as was exhibited in Gordon, is sufficient consolation for the failure of the campaign. An ancient poet said that an upright and resolute man struggling undismayed against adversity is the admiration of gods and men. Such a man was Gordon, England's Sir Galahad, her knight truly *sans peur et sans reproche*. While she justly mourns his loss, his noble life and death will remain a bright example for her soldiers in all time to come, and wherever civilization sheds her light, his name will be engraved high in the glorious roll of those heroes of humanity whose fame will never die !

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF EGYPTIAN HISTORY, FROM MÉ- HÉMET-ALI TO 1886.

- 1769.—Mohammed- or Méhémet-Ali born at Kavala, Macedonia.
- 1801.—Goes in command of a band of Albanians to fight the French in Egypt.
- 1805.—Proclaimed Viceroy by the Mamlook Beys.
- 1807, March 7.—British invasion of Egypt. Gen. Fraser captures Alexandria.
- 1807, Sept. 14.—Compelled to evacuate Egypt after great losses. 1,000 heads of British soldiers killed in battle exposed on Place de Rumelia, Cairo. British prisoners well treated and returned without ransom after evacuation.
- 1811, March 1.—Méhémet-Ali exterminates the Mamlooks at the Citadel, Cairo, and throughout Egypt.
- 1811-1818.—Suppression of Wahabee rebellion in Arabia by his son, Ibrahim-Pasha.
- 1815.—Méhémet-Ali organizes his army upon European system.
- 1820-1821.—Conquest of Dongola, Sennaar, and Kordofan. Ismaïl-Pasha burnt to death at Shendy.
- 1823.—Méhémet-Ali founds Khartoum, capital of the Egyptian Soudan.
- 1823-1827.—Ibrahim-Pasha's campaigns in Greece. Destruction of Turkish and Egyptian fleets at Navarino (1827).
- 1832.—Méhémet-Ali rebels against Sultan. Ibrahim defeats Turks at Koniah (Asia Minor). European powers interfere and stop Ibrahim's advance.
- 1839.—Méhémet-Ali rebels again. Ibrahim conquers Syria, defeats Turks at Nezib, and threatens Constantinople. Europe interferes, compels Méhémet-Ali to give up Syria, but (1841) he is recognized Viceroy for life with succession to eldest male of his family.
- 1841.—Establishment of his dynasty guaranteed by Turkey, England, France, Russia, Austria, and Prussia. Egypt remains a vassal of the Porte, pays tribute, and furnishes contingent in war.
- 1846.—Catholic mission founded at Khartoum under protection of Austria.
- 1848.—Méhémet-Ali becomes insane. Ibrahim-Pasha regent.
- 1849.—Méhémet-Ali dies. Ibrahim also. Abbas his nephew succeeds him.
- 1854.—Abbas assassinated. Saïd-Pasha, third son of Méhémet-Ali, succeeds him.
- 1863.—Death of Saïd. Accession of Ismaïl-Pasha, son of Ibrahim.
- 1866.—By doubling the tribute he obtains the title of Khedive and change in order of succession to his eldest son, instead of eldest male, who is his uncle, Halim.
- 1869.—Opening of Suez Canal with fêtes costing \$10,000,000. Sir Samuel Baker appointed Governor-General of Soudan.
- 1869-1878.—Numerous appointments of American officers in the Egyptian Army.
- 1874.—Gordon succeeds Sir S. Baker as Governor-General of Soudan.



- 1874, Oct.—Zobeir defeats and kills the Sultan of Darfour. Ismail-Pasha sends an army and completes the conquest and annexation of Darfour.
- 1875.—Gordon establishes garrisons in "equatorial provinces" up to the lakes. Zobeir summoned to Cairo, made a pasha, and held in gilded captivity.
- 1875, Oct. and Nov.—Commencement of Abyssinian war. Munzinger-Pasha, with 1,000 men, and Col. Arrendrup, with 2,500, entirely destroyed.
- 1876.—Egyptian army of 15,000 regulars, under Ratib-Pasha, defeated at battle of Gura Plains, March, 1876, by King John. Evacuate the country in May. Establishment of "mixed tribunals." Financial difficulties. Mr. Cave reports to British Government that Egypt equitably owes less than £45,000,000 of the £100,000,000 for which she had issued her bonds.
- 1877.—Ismail voluntarily appoints Commissioners of the Public Debt, English, French, and Italian. They gradually seize the entire administration and usurp Ismail's powers. Turco-Russian war. Ismail sends contingent of 20,000 men.
- 1878.—Rebellion of Zobeir-Pasha's sons at his instigation in the Soudan.
- 1879, Feb. 18.—Commissioners reduce the army. Emeute of 2,500 regular officers discharged penniless and refused the two years' back pay due them. They compel the Ministry to partial payment.
- 1879.—Ismail, exasperated by seeing himself and his country sacrificed for foreign bondholders, dismisses the Commissioners. They appeal to their governments (June 26), which obtain from the Sultan a firman deposing Ismail. Tewfik succeeds him.
- End of 1879.—Gordon resigns and Raouf-Pasha succeeds him as Governor-General of Soudan.
- 1881, Feb. 2.—Achmed-el-Arabi, Col. 4th Infantry, and three other colonels protest against promotions of Circassians over their heads. Sent to citadel in arrest. Their regiments rise in arms, rescue them, and compel dismissal of Minister of War.
- 1881, July.—Mohammed Achmed proclaims himself the expected Mahdi.
- 1881, Aug. 10.—He defeats the force sent by Raouf-Pasha to suppress him.
- 1881, Sept. 9.—The Ministry being about to disperse the mutinous regiments at Cairo, Arabi surrounds the Khedive's palace with 4,000 men, demands dismissal of Ministry, a constitution, and a parliament. Sherif-Pasha appointed Prime-Minister.
- 1881, Dec. 8.—Reshid-Bey with 1,500 men defeated and killed by the Mahdi in Sennaar.
- 1881, Dec. 26.—Assembly of Notables convene, announce a just and equitable plan of constitutional government, and guarantee payment of public debt and its interest.
- 1881, Dec.—Plan rejected by England and France. Ministerial crisis.
- 1882, Feb. 3.—Sherif-Pasha resigns (Feb. 5th). Arabi Minister of War.
- 1882, Feb. 23.—Raouf-Pasha recalled; Giegler acting Gov.-Gen'l of Soudan.
- 1882, March 15.—Yusuf-Pasha leaves Khartoum with 5,000 men to attack the Mahdi.

- 1882, April 11.—Trial of Circassian officers for conspiracy to murder Arabi. Ministry convoke Assembly of Notables without Khedive's consent.
- 1882, May 6.—Sennaar hard pressed by rebels, who are finally defeated with great loss.
- 1882, May 12.—Abd-el-Kader-Pasha, the new Governor-General, reaches Khartoum.
- 1882, May 20.—English and French squadrons repair to Alexandria to overawe the people. Their presence produces intense irritation.
- 1882, May 25.—England and France demand Arabi's banishment. Refused by the Ministry.
- 1882, June 11.—Massacre at Alexandria. 150 Europeans and 700 natives killed and wounded.
- 1882, June 13.—News reaches Khartoum of Yusuf-Pasha's total destruction at Jebel Gedir.
- 1882, June 24.—The Mahdi repulsed at Bara (Kordofan), with loss of 3,000.
- 1882, July 11.—Bombardment of Alexandria by the British fleet.
- 1882, July 23.—Arabi proclaimed a rebel by the Khedive.
- 1882, Aug.—Sir Arch. Alison occupies Alexandria with 6,000 British troops.
- 1882, Aug. 15.—Lord Wolseley arrives and takes command. About 30,000 British in Egypt.
- 1882, Aug. 24.—British seize Suez Canal and make it their base, in spite of pledges to respect its neutrality given to de Lesseps, which had kept Arabi from destroying it.
- 1882, Aug. 28.—Amr-el-Makashef attacks Duem, and is repulsed with loss of 3,000.
- 1882, Sept. 8-14.—The Mahdi makes three assaults on El Obeïd. Defeated; loss 15,000.
- 1882, Sept. 9.—British captured advance post at Kassassin.
- 1882, Sept. 12-13.—Battle of Tel-el-Kebir. Total defeat of Arabi's army.
- 1882, Sept. 15.—Cairo occupied by British. Arabi surrenders.
- 1882, Sept. 25.—Khedive re-enters Cairo. Sherif Prime-Minister.
- 1882, Dec. 10.—Some of Arabi's disaffected regiments sent to the Soudan.
- 1882, Dec. 15.—Lt.-Col. O. H. Stewart (11th Hussars) reaches Khartoum and reports situation to British Government.
- 1883, Jan. 5, 17.—The Mahdi captures Bara. El Obeïd, reduced to starvation, surrenders to the Mahdi, and the garrison join his ranks.
- 1883, Feb. 20, 24, and 27.—Abd-el-Kader defeats the rebels in three engagements.
- 1883, March 10.—General Hicks arrives at Khartoum.
- 1883, March 22.—Abd-el-Kader defeats the rebels at Karkodj.
- 1883, March 26.—He is recalled to Cairo and superseded by Allah-ed-Deen.
- 1883, April 29.—Hicks-Pasha defeats rebels at Marabia (Sennaar). Achmed-el-Makashef killed.
- 1883, May.—Hicks-Pasha defeats the Mahdi near Khartoum and at Jebel-Aïn, and drives him back to Kordofan.
- 1883, Aug. 13.—Osman-Digma attacks Suakim, and is repulsed with loss.

- 1883, Aug. 20.—Hicks-Pasha supercedes Suleiman as Commander-in-Chief in Soudan.
- 1883, Sept. 8.—He leaves Khartoum with 11,000 men to recapture El Obefd.
- 1883, Nov. 1-4.—Is exterminated with all his force at Kashgill.
- 1883, Nov. 6.—Consul Moncrieff, with Egyptian force, destroyed at Tokar.
- 1883, Nov. 9.—Gladstone's speech at Guildhall, announcing partial evacuation of Egypt.
- 1883, Nov. 20.—News of the disasters reaches London.
- 1883, 26-30.—Suakim attacked by Osman-Digma. British Ministry order Tewfik to abandon Soudan and Nubia to 1st cataract.
- 1883, Dec. 2.—Seven hundred Egyptian troops destroyed near Suakim; only fifty escape.
- 1883, Dec. 18.—Baker-Pasha leaves Cairo for Suakim with a motley force of 4,000.
- 1883, Dec. 26.—Turkey notified that her intervention will be allowed in Soudan.
- 1884, Jan. 8.—Sherif's Ministry resign rather than abandon Soudan. Nubar-Pasha, Prime-Minister.
- 1884, Jan. 18.—Gordon leaves London. (24) Reaches Cairo, and leaves next day for Khartoum.
- 1884, Feb. 4.—Baker defeated at Tokar, with loss of 2,500.
- 1884, Feb. 10.—Suakim attacked. Defended by British gun-boats. Admiral Hewett, Governor.
- 1884, Feb. 11.—Fall of Sinkat. Tewfik-Bey and garrison die fighting to the last.
- 1884, Feb. 18.—Gordon reaches Khartoum and is warmly received.
- 1884, Feb. 19.—Sir Gerald Graham sails from Suez for Suakim with 5,000 men.
- 1884, Feb. 21.—Tokar captured by Osman-Digma.
- 1884, Feb. 29.—Battle of Teb. Graham defeats Osman-Digma with great slaughter.
- 1884, March 2.—Graham re-takes Tokar. (5) Returns to Suakim with all his force.
- 1884, March 8.—Earl Granville notifies Sir Ev. Baring that Egyptian frontier must be at 1st cataract.
- 1884, March 13.—Battle of Tamaï. 2d Brigade broken and guns lost and recaptured, British loss, 180; rebels, 2,000.
- 1884, March 16.—Gordon attacked at Khartoum.
- 1884, March 21.—Makes sortie, and is repulsed at Halfiyeh by treachery of two pashas.
- 1884, March 24.—Terrible march of British towards Tamanieb. One half prostrated by heat.
- 1884, March 27.—Tamanieb wells occupied and Osman-Digma's camp burnt.
- 1884, March 29.—Sir Herbert Stewart with cavalry force pushes on to Handoub wells.
- 1884, March 30.—Returns exhausted. All Graham's army return to Suakim.
- 1884, April 1.—Graham re-embarks for Suez with all his force.
- 1884, April 2.—Osman-Digma captures many cattle and 1,000 sheep within one mile of Suakim.
- 1884, April 5.—General Stephenson and Sir E. Baring ordered to report on Korosko, Suakim, and Nile routes.

- 1884, April 8.—Gordon telegraphs that he has supplies for five months.
- 1884, April 16.—Consul Power reports Khartoum blockaded north, east, and west.
- 1884, April 20.—Refugees sent for safety from Khartoum intercepted at Shendy ; 450 soldiers and 1,500 people massacred.
- 1884, April 30.—Admiral Hewett interviews King John at Adowa. Gordon sends indignant dispatches to Sir E. Baring, charging abandonment.
- 1884, May 8.—River route adopted for rescuing expedition. Camel depot ordered formed at Assouan.
- 1884, May 12.—Mr. Gladstone's declaration that the Mahdi is fighting for freedom and should not be put down. England withdraws proposition to Turkey to send her troops to Soudan.
- 1884, May 26.—Berber captured. The garrison and 2,000 people massacred.
- 1884, May 27.—El-Fascher, capital of Darfour, captured by the rebels.
- 1884, June 1.—River route abandoned. Suakim-Berber route decided on.
- 1884, June 14.—Admiral Hewett reports King John willing to furnish troops.
- 1884, June 16.—Engineer troops sent to Suakim to survey route.
- 1884, June 30.—Mudir of Dongola defeats 13,000 rebels.
- 1884, July 19.—Railroad plant and iron-clad cars sent to Suakim.
- 1884, Aug. 18.—Suakim route abandoned. Railroad plant shipped to India. River route finally adopted.
- 1884, Aug. 31.—General Lord Wolseley sails from England. (Sept. 9) Reaches Cairo.
- 1884, Sept. 15.—Gordon shells and destroys Berber. (18) Col. Stewart, Consuls Power and Herbin, with a number of refugees, wrecked at fourth cataract and massacred.
- 1884, Sept. 26.—Camel corps leave England. (Oct. 5) Wolseley at Wady Halfa. (6) Gordon shells Shendy and other towns. (28) 6,000 British troops south of Siot.
- 1884, Nov. 3.—Wolseley reaches Dongola. (15) 800 whale-boats reach Wady Halfa and start (Nov. 19) with 3,000 troops up the Nile ; 6,000 more on the way between first and second cataracts.
- 1884, Dec. 6.—Sir Herbert Stewart with 1,000 men pushes forward from Dongola to Ambukol.
- 1884, Dec. 13.—Wolseley reaches Debbé. (16) Joins Stewart at Korti.
- 1884, Dec. 25.—10,000 British troops between second cataract and Korti (30) Stewart starts with 1,150 men and 2,000 camels for Gakdul. (Jan. 2, 1885) Occupies Gakdul wells. (3) Returns alone to Korti.
- 1885, Jan. 5.—General Earle sent up the Nile towards Abou-Hamed with 2,400 men.
- 1885, Jan. 8.—Stewart starts back from Korti with 1,500 more men and as many camels.
- 1885, Jan. 10.—Burnaby leaves Korti with a supply train for Stewart at Gakdul.
- 1885, Jan. 13.—Omdurman captured.
- 1885, Jan. 17.—Battle of Abou-Klea wells. Burnaby killed.
- 1885, Jan. 18.—Gordon makes unsuccessful sortie.
- 1885, Jan. 19.—Battle of Shebacat wells (or Gubat). Stewart mortally wounded.



- 1885, Jan. 21.—Four of Gordon's steamers arrive at Gubat. (22 and 23) Sir Charles Wilson shells villages. (24) Starts up the Nile for Khartoum with two steamers.
- 1885, Jan. 24.—Earle's column leaves Homdab for Abou-Hained.
- 1885, Jan. 26.—Khartoum captured and Gordon killed. About 4,000 slaughtered.
- 1885, Jan. 28.—Sir C. Wilson finds Khartoum in possession of the enemy and turns back.
- 1885, Jan. 29.—One steamer wrecked. (31) The other also. He takes refuge on an island.
- 1885, Feb. 1-2.—Gallantly rescued by Lord Charles Beresford on another steamer from Gubat.
- 1885, Feb. 8.—Wolseley directed from London to capture Berber at all hazards.
- 1885, Feb. 10.—Sir Redvers Buller reaches Gubat with reinforcements. 2,600 men there.
- 1885, Feb. 10.—Battle of Birti or Kirbekan. General Earle killed. Brackenbury in command.
- 1885, Feb. 11.—West Kent Regiment leave Korti for Gubat.
- 1885, Feb. 12.—Sir Gerald Graham assigned to command of Suakim expedition. Railroad to be laid "at once!"
- 1885, Feb. 14.—Sir Redvers Buller evacuates Gubat after disabling remaining steamers.
- 1885, Feb. 16.—Sir Herbert Stewart dies and is buried at Gakdul wells.
- 1885, Feb. 19.—Sir R. Buller ordered to concentrate at Korti.
- 1885, Feb. 19.—Departure of the Guards from London for Suakim.
- 1885, Feb. 20-25.—Buller's difficult retreat to Korti.
- 1885, Feb. 25.—Brackenbury crosses his force to east bank and same day receives orders to concentrate at Korti, and crosses back.
- 1885, Feb. 28.—Contract made for pipe-line for Suakim route.
- 1885, March 2.—Wolseley announces purpose to hold Korti-Gakdul route.
- 1885, March 9.—All his force concentrated at Korti.
- 1885, March 10.—Grenadier and Coldstream Guards (General Freemantle) reach Suakim.
- 1885, March 15.—Zobeir-Pasha and his two sons arrested for treason and incarcerated at Gibraltar.
- 1885, March 20.—Wolseley retires from Korti to Dongola and gradually to second cataract during April and May.
- 1885, March 20.—Battle at Hasheen. Graham defeats Osman-Digma and returns to Suakim.
- 1885, March 22.—Second battle at Hasheen and return to Suakim.
- 1885, March 28.—Graham advances to McNeil's zeriba. Two miles' advance in two weeks.
- 1885, April 1.—Finds Tamaï wells evacuated. Burns Osman-Digma's camp and returns to Suakim.
- 1885, April.—Railroad project abandoned. Plant sent back to England. Another Mahdi appears in Kordofan.

- 1885, May 7.—Wolseley goes through Cairo and Suez to Suakim, reviews Graham's army, and returns to Cairo.
- 1885, May 5-20.—Graham re-embarks with his army and returns to Alexandria.
- 1885, June 21.—The Mahdi dies in Kordofan. Abd-Allah Kalif succeeds him.
- 1885, July.—Wolseley returns to England. Lt.-Gen. Stephenson left in command of all British forces in Egypt.
- 1885, Dec. 30.—Sir R. Buller attacks and defeats rebels at Ghinnis, above Wady Halfa.
- 1886.—British forces withdrawn, leaving two regiments at first cataract.













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